

The

# Poverty Problem

in India

BEING

a dissertation on the causes and remedies  
of Indian poverty

BY

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CALCUTTA THACKER, SPINK

BOMBAY THACKER & Co, Limited

LONDON W. THACKER & Co 87, NEWGATE STREET

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1895

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TO MY DEAR

MOTHER

who first inspired me with a wish to

STUDY THE

GREAT PROBLEM OF OUR NATIONAL POVERTY

The following pages are most affectionately  
inscribed

## PREFACE

It is the universal conviction of the native Indian population that the country is growing poorer. If there is any foundation of truth in the *conviction*, no time ought to be lost in pushing the question to the front. It would appear *prima facie* that the people themselves are the best judges of their own condition, for it is only the wearer who knows if the shoe pinches. I have, nevertheless, attempted to examine in the following pages how far this popular impression is borne out by available facts and figures.

My work here is not confined to a mere examination of an idea. In this essay, I mainly concern myself in inquiring into the various reasons why the poverty is so intense and grinding, and what would likely prove as remedies to the existing state of things. The subject from its manifold aspects, has not hitherto been approached from the standpoint of practical politics, though discussions of side issues have frequently been indulged in in this quarter or that. Even the Indian National Congress, which pretends to be the highest exponent of our national claims, has done little more than pass vague and meaningless resolutions on this question. I have here taken the subject as a whole, discussed the several causes of this ever yawning gulf of poverty from no visionary or doctrinaire point of view, and formulated to the best of my light a series of remedies which might prove themselves effective.

Now a word of explanation. The main part of this book was written and printed off before October last

For some private reasons over which I have had practically no control, its publication has been so long put off. Owing to this unconscionable delay, I have been obliged to reprint several pages where alterations have been urgently necessary, but nearly the whole of the book remains as it was printed ten months ago. I also beg to express my regret for the many misprints, faults of omission and commission in punctuation, and other small defects which have crept into this work in spite of my best endeavours to avoid them, but they are so obvious that I do not deem it necessary to add a list of corrigenda.

In conclusion, I beg to acknowledge my deep obligations to my esteemed friend Dr. Nidrañ Sircar, M A, M D, but for whose kindly interest the book would never have seen the light of day. My heartfelt thanks are also due to Professor Ramananda Chatterjee, M A, of the Calcutta City College, for his very material assistance in seeing the pamphlet through the Press. I am also indebted to our distinguished countryman, Sir Romesh Chandra Mitter Kt, for his very kind letter of encouragement which is inserted in the next page.

Beadon Street,  
CALCUTTA,  
*September 1, 1895*

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PRITHWIS CHANDRA RAY.

# FREE TRADE *vs* PROTECTION

OR

## *INDIA'S CASE AGAINST FREE TRADE*

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FIFTY years ago, writing before the Anti-Coin-Law League could induce the British Parliament to grant to the United Kingdom even a fair modicum of free trade, the seer of Chelsea complained that though England was full of wealth, yet she was dying of inanition. Here in India, protective tariffs were practically abolished before 1848, and yet after the lapse of about half a century, though the land 'blossoms and grows with unabated bounty, waving with yellow harvests,' nearly one-fifth of her people in the year of grace 1895 are on the actual verge of starvation. Between the

condition of the British Isles before, and that of India after, the adoption of free trade, what a difference! If Cobden, Villiers, and Bright had not carried their battle with the fire and energy they did, England would have probably by this time gone to the wall and her greatness and world-wide Empire lost. And India with the blessings of free trade, 70 per cent. of her people toiling and drudging day and night to eke out an honest 'living' by tilling the soil, is driving, driving fast—God only knows to what fate.

‘ Indeed, India has a strong case against free trade, or what trade goes by that name. She has been a commercial country from time immemorial—head of all others in enterprising undertakings. Even in the days of Solomon and the ancient

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Pharoahs, her merchants had introduced Indian ware into the countries bordering on the Mediterranean Sea Nor were the walls of China or the wild plateaux of Central Asia totally innocent of Indian merchandise Her country crafts had anchored in many a friendly Australasian port , and America, long before the Empire that gave birth to her discoverer had been established, afforded safe harbours to many an adventurous Indian vessel A country with such proud antecedents in this line ought to be the last to murmur or wage any war against free trade What, then, has India now to complain of against one of the greatest civilising levers of modern days is the question in the discussion of which we will interest ourselves in this chapter.



India is a vast country which necessarily produces much and consumes much. All that she produces is not consumed, and all that she consumes is not produced, in India. Much of what she produces is sent out to foreign countries in exchange of much that she brings in from them. The law of exports and imports is the kernel of political economy. This clearly understood, we shall find some satisfactory explanation of the unhappy position we now find ourselves in.

Before the year 1860, our export and import trade tended towards an equality. It is the nature of all commerce to gravitate towards an equilibrium, for Ricardo has most conclusively proved that the equation of international demand is the law of international trade. But since 1860, our ex-

ports have been increaing by leaps and bounds, while the imports have not been able to keep pace with the former. The following table exhibits the inequality caused by the excess of the exports over the imports:—

Years	Indian Imports	Indian Exports
	Rs	Rs
1871	399,139,420	575,569,510
1881-82	592,960,480	819,019,600
1890-91	690,349,000	1,023,505,260
1894-95	739,500 000	1,020,100,000

A very favourable balance of trade this, the British free trader will tell us, for his political economy teaches that the profits of a country vary inversely with its demand for imported goods. Nothing could be more satisfactory, will cry out the Indian dabbler in the science of economics, for India has much more to sell to the foreign markets than she needs buy from

them. Yes, satisfactory as far as abstract theories of political economy go. But when we remember that, in order to meet all those payments of ours which are fixed in gold, we have now to send about 66 percent. more produce to England than were required of us 30 years ago, that for this balance of trade no adequate return is made to India, that the home charges of an alien Government and the remittances of alien officials generally secure this ever-increasing excess of exports over imports, and that, under our existing relations with England, this excess, as Mill reminds us, is bound to be permanent,—when we remember all these, we see the absurdity of the notion that ‘an excess of exports over imports shows increasing wealth.’ Far from it; for it means our impoverishment, means the drainage of

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so much of our wealth to England—and for what in return? In the language of no less an authority than the Marquis of Salisbury, ‘much of the revenue of India is exported without any equitable equivalent in return.’

If India had been independent, and England and India had not stood in the relation of the conqueror and the conquered, the ruler and the ruled, probably there could have been nothing more pleasing to shout hallelujahs at than this so-called ‘satisfactory balance of trade.’ Though, it is true, from one-third to about one-half of this trade balance is received by India in hard cash, this surplus, as matters stand at present, is ultimately drained to England and other European countries, in some shape or other, and leaves India poorer by so much. Of this drainage we shall have occasion to

speak more fully in a subsequent chapter. This state of things is, however, not entirely without an historical parallel. When Rome was mistress of the world, Sicily, Spain, Africa, Egypt, and Britain, in short, all her colonies and dependencies, exported to Italy far more than they imported from Italy. With what result, readers of history need not be told.

Excess of exports over imports? With what fond ignorance all of us seem to cherish this economic beatitude—as if this ‘favourable’ balance of trade were the precursor of the millennium to be. Alas! how much intelligence we lack to know black from white.

Let us now analyse our exports and our imports, what are the things that we send away and bring back home in return.

First, let us see what commodities India chiefly exports to other countries.

Raw cotton, cotton twist and yarn, and cotton-manufactures, rice and paddy, raw jute and jute-manufactures constitute about half of the total export trade of India. Other articles that we sell to foreign peoples are principally grain and pulses (besides rice and paddy), opium, seeds, tea, coffee, hides, skins, dyes, and woollen goods.

Even a very careless and passing glance over this list will show that our export trade comprises mostly necessities of life. Food-grains and cotton—what in the matter-of-fact world can approach these in importance? To fill the empty stomach and cover the bare person—nothing more sacred to most persons. India thus stands in the proud position of supplying shirts and

boots, as Carlyle would have expressed it, to millions of people in this world with her cotton, wool, and hide, and satisfying the hunger of as many people with her rice, wheat, tea, and coffee. As the 'Son of Man,' who saved Christendom, had no place to lay his head on the day of crisis, so India, allowing other peoples to live on comparatively more comfortably, has to day nothing to cover the utter nakedness of many of her toiling millions and satisfy the grim hunger of her increasing population !

Many of the above articles (the reader must not fancy the list to be any way exhaustive) had duties levied upon them formerly. In 1873, the export duty on wheat was abolished and duties on oil seeds were repealed two years later. Duty on rice continues to be levied to this day at the

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rate of 3 annas per maund or 6d. per cwt.; but, considering the rate at which free trade is being pushed up in this country, it is on the cards that this must also go in a few years. On the other hand, the closing of the Indian mints (Mr. R. H. Elliot, a well-known planter of Mysore, has proved conclusively in a recent book *o*) is already acting as a heavy protecting duty against the Indian producer, and the artificial enhancement of the Rupee is indirectly felt as an export duty on all Indian staples. The present state of the finances of the Bombay mill-owners will prove sufficiently to what extent they have been handicapped in their competition with other silver-using countries. This, then, indeed is a serious rift in the lace.



In sad contrast, however, to the export, stands our import trade. Let us now analyse the imports.

During the 50 years ending in 1888-89 cotton-goods had formed 35 per cent., and treasure 26 per cent., of the total imports of India. The value of British cotton piece-goods imported into India in 1892-93 was Rs. 22,000,000, and in 1893-94 Rs. 28, 319, 805. Next in order come —

- 1 Metals
  - (a) Iron
  - (c) Copper
- 2 Government stores (munitions of war, boots, liquors, clothing for soldiers and railway plant)
- 3 Liquors
- 4 Coal
- 5 Railway plant for the guaranteed and assisted companies
- 6 Salt, provisions, machinery and mill work, manufactured silk, etc.

Even such articles as silk, hardware, cutlery, plated ware, refined sugar, glass, ivory, umbrellas, and perfumery are imported into this country to the value of about 10 crores annually. This is not all, for there is nothing manufactured in Europe of which a large quantity is not shipped out to this country to be sold by wholesale and in retail all over the wide land.

What does, then, the above analysis show? Except cotton-manufactures, most of our imports are luxuries or things that do not answer to the primary needs of the natives of this country. And are not these articles of luxury bought at the expense of the food of the millions, and as little required by us unsophisticated Orientals as by the man in the moon? If, as we are

told, representative, democratic, or for the matter of that any western form of government is unsuited to India, we make bold to say that British articles of luxury are hundred times more unsuited to the requirements of a simple and tropical people. What on earth has a country to do with perfumery and ivory, refined sugar and glassware, Sheffield knives or Bradford woollens, Stafford iron or Glasgow umbrellas, that has not even a morsel of coarse rice to offer every day to one-fifth of her men, women, and children? Rousseau spoke the truth when he said that 'if there were no luxury, there would be no poor.' And M. Emile de Laveleye has demonstrated clearly that in a poor country, 'luxury, far from contributing to raise wages retards their rise.'

will have not only their stores and railway plant, their clothing and boots, brought out from England, but a whole army of things of which we greatly hesitate to give a list to our readers lest it might be discredited as fiction. Yet our readers must be given to understand that nearly 5 crores worth of foreign liquors, provisions, tea and tobacco, horses, porcelain and earthenware, and fruits and vegetables annually find their way into this country chiefly for Anglo-Indian consumption.

Conceive of a race of rulers and a daily increasing number of anglicised and perverted natives who, even in the tropical belt of India and in the sweltering heat of our plains, annually require nearly 5,000,000 gallons of foreign liquors (besides the full out-turn of 22 Indian breweries,

amounting to over 6,000,000 gallons) to keep them up in good spirits ! Wonder aside, may we not ask if fruits and vegetables (cannot most foreign fruits and vegetables be naturalised in India ?), porcelain and earthenware, horses and provisions are to be imported from elsewhere in return for our indigo and jute, why should we not as well get English jackals and Irish terriers, Italian nightingales and African parrots, cartloads of refuse of Parisian tables and shoals of reports of effete Commissions and Committees for our seeds and oils ? That would be ideal free trade indeed !

Who ever heard of a nation becoming prosperous and wealthy by exchanging its necessities of life for the luxuries of another ? It is evident both from a

*priori* reasoning and from experience that where such exchange obtains the prices of necessities of life are increased, while those of luxuries are decreased. This is the thin end of the wedge which cuts both ways. Even distinguished and out-and-out free traders like the late Mr. Fawcett had to admit that the strongest case against free trade lay in this fact. The 'supply and demand' theory is inexorable, but while its result is game to one, it is death to another. The increase in the price of necessities of life? How much of India's misery and the starving condition of her people is owing to this simple fact! And the decrease in the price of imported luxuries? What a temptation to waste money that might go to feed many hungry mouths or be otherwise

ten times more profitably spent or invested !

It is always an unsound commercial policy—fraught with the greatest evil—to exchange the necessaries of life of a country for the luxuries of another. The financial insolvency of ancient Egypt which was for a long time the granary of the Roman Empire is a striking object lesson in political economy. The condition of some of the Asiatic peoples who export grains to Russia to day affords us a second example. Our eyes ought to be wide awake to the injurious effects which a similar trade is also bearing in this country at the present moment.

And what facilities have not our Government created for flooding us with the cheap goods of other countries ? Though export

duties on some articles were continued to be levied so late as 1875, our ports were practically thrown open to the commerce of the world as early as 1833. The inland duties were abolished from Bengal in the year 1836, from Bombay in 1838, and from Madras in 1844. The abolition of the Navigation Laws in 1848, and the sweeping away of all differences between goods of British and Continental origin in 1859, crowned the edifice of free trade in India. But import duties for revenue purposes have from time to time been imposed and repealed. A 5 per cent. duty has been the general rule, only after the Mutiny this having been increased to 10 per cent. for a few years. The accustomed duty of 5 per cent. has been re-imposed on imported goods in March,



1894. This is a further rift in the lute.

All Tariff Acts passed before 1878 included cotton-goods, but this disquieting item could evidently not long remain subject to any impost. The Lancashire cotton-spinners were not slow to agitate for the abolition of the cotton-duties, and their friends in Parliament managed to pass a resolution in the House of Commons, on the 11th of July 1877, declaring that the cotton-duties, 'being protective in their nature, are contrary to sound commercial policy, and ought to be repealed without delay so soon as the financial condition of India will permit.' Like many resolutions of the House this would have been shelved or passed unnoticed, or vigorously attacked if Indian interests were

duly consulted and weighed, but Manchester manufacturers really brought to bear upon their agitation an amount of pressure, to which Lord Beaconsfield's (then Mr. Disraeli) Ministry easily yielded. The duties were accordingly partially reduced in 1878 and 1879, and it was not before 1882 that the financial condition of the country permitted Lord Ripon to carry out loyally the wishes of the Imperial Parliament. Financial exigencies have, however, obliged the Government of India to re-impose the cotton import duties in December last, and a countervailing excise is now levied upon home manufactures up to yarns of 20 s. count, ostensibly for the satisfaction of Lancashire. What a compromise of free trade principles !

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Now, let us inquire into the results of free trade in India. The prime object of Richard Cobden and his Anti-Corn-Law League was to make bread cheaper, and the repeal of the Corn Laws has demonstrated to what extent his efforts have been successful. The price of corn in England has now been reduced to nearly a fourth of what it was during the time of the Corn-Laws. And in India, with the experience of full 40 years of free trade, with the flood gates of international commerce thrown wide open, we regret we have an exactly opposite result to record. The prices of rice and wheat and all other staple food-grains have already run up to 3 or 4 times within living memory. In every single decade the prices of food-grains rise more.

than 50 per cent. Said the Military Member of the Governor-General's Council (General Sir Henry Brackenbury) in the debate over the Imperial Budget of 1894-95 :—'I find that the price of rice has risen 38 per cent. between 1884 and 1892 on the average of Madras and Rangoon; wheat, which we have taken for seven stations, has risen 72 per cent. between 1884 and 1892; barley, which is one of our most important items as food for horses, has risen 85 per cent. between 1884 and 1892; and the price of gram has increased 49 per cent. between 1884 and 1892, taking such stations as Cawnpore, Delhi, Rawalpindi, and Kurrachee.' In another chapter we will see that this increase has not been accompanied with a proportionate rise in the profits of the

farmer or the wages of the labourer, though the fact should not be lost sight of that dear living is ill compensated by high wages

The *Statistical Atlas of India*, prepared in 1886 for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, says "In the four prominent wheat-producing tracts, recent inquiry has proved that while the food supply has not diminished with the increase of exports, the food purchasing power of the cultivating

does not appear to diminish! Probably we should be told, as Sir John Gorst took the opportunity to point out in *Parliament* in connection with the debate on the India Budget of 1888, that 'the cultivated area of India had been increased by 25 per cent during the last 30 years, whilst the population had increased only from 15 to 18 per cent. But we have to deduct a large margin of land from this calculation as all these new places will not produce grains, while others that used to produce grains before have now ceased to be cultivated for their inability to pay rent wages and profits or are being utilised for some other more paying, new, or tempting crops. The jute fever in Lower Bengal, the rage for tea in the upland valleys of Northern India the rush for poppy in the valley of

the Ganges round Patna and Benares, for coffee in Mysore, Coorg, and the Nilgiris, the usurpation of the paddy-fields of Behar by indigo, and about a large per cent of the so-called cultivable land in the Madras and the Bombay Presidencies remaining waste are sufficient to indicate which way the wind blows. To crown all, there is that terrible fact which must always be borne in mind, to which reference is made in another chapter, that the Indian soil is slowly being exhausted owing to competitive over-production and a confused knowledge of the science of agriculture prevailing in the country. With a population growing at the rate of 3 millions per annum, with the prices of corn remaining very near to prohibitive rates everywhere for the greater part of the year, with the export trade

in Indian grains annually increasing, with the continuous exhaustion of the soil, with the growing and short-sighted policy of the peasant classes towards restricting the culture of edible grains, with the periodic visitations of famine, and with nearly one-fifth of the entire Indian people constantly living on the brink of starvation, we ask our readers if it is rational to conclude that our food-supply is not diminishing, or that the purchasing power of the cultivating population has considerably increased?

Now to turn to a graver aspect of the question. When a country sells its agricultural produce to foreign peoples, it indirectly sends away the fertility of the soil with it; the distant consumers not giving back to the land of the country, as



home consumers would do, the fertilising elements which they abstract from it. This theory was very ably enunciated by Mr H C Carey, a distinguished American protectionist, in his *Principles of Social Science*, and John Stuart Mill, than whom there could be found no greater authority on the subject admits the great physical truth upon which this argument is founded. But Mill says that this is irrelevant to the question of protectionism, as free trade does not compel any country to export her agricultural produce and no country will do so unless it will be to her advantage. Though the elements of fertility be sent away, Mill adds 'a constant succession of new soils not yet exhausted of their fertility,' will be found ready for cultivation, and failing that,

importation of manure will be resorted to. It is a pity India bears no analogy to the normal state of society which Mill had before his eyes in discussing this point. The easy-going nature of our people and the fact of our soil having been parcelled out into microscopic farms are the most irritating sources of our poverty. Indians have a love and respect for their homesteads and their paternal acres, of which there can be found no parallel anywhere in this wide world. They will stick to their exhausted lands, sink or swim, mobilization being, to all intents and purposes, unknown amongst them. The fond attachment of the people to their ancestral holdings and their positive repugnance, almost bordering on superstition, to migrating outside their villages in order

to break up new soils are facts which cannot be easily explained away Sir William Hunter Says 'there is still enough land in India for the whole people, but the Indian peasant clings to his native district, however over crowded Migration or emigration has hitherto worked on too small a scale to afford a solution of the difficulty ' Nor will he import foreign manures or take to any new implements of the nature of the reaping and the thrashing machines, which do so much to increase the productive power of land, such is the stolid conservatism of the Indian peasant He applies some manure to the more valuable crops, its use being limited in some cases by poverty, in others by ignorance , e g , he will have nothing to do with fish bones or fossil-deposits, which •

have been pronounced as very good fertilisers of the soil, though they may cost him nothing and are so abundant around him. So Mill's arguments do not hold good in the case of India. The fact, however, remains, as he admits, that the elements of fertility are, in the long run, lost to the country which makes enormous exportation of her raw produce ; and as she answers this description, India is ruining her interests by the nature of her present commerce. Is not this single phase of the question enough to open our eyes to the large and momentous bearings of the subject under discussion ?

Again : slowly and silently another mighty harm is being done to India which would require more than a century to repair, if indeed any adequate reparation

were ever possible. India is an Oriental country where machinery has never been known to do duty for man's hand. Their hand-loom, their primitive craftsmanship, their rude implements of agriculture, the strong common-sense used in irrigating their fields, had, before the conquest of India by England, stood Indians in very good stead, and the people could hold their own against all sorts of foreign imports. But, as Adam Smith remarks, in manufactures a very small advantage is enough to enable the people of one country to undersell the workmen of another even in the home market, so, thanks to the blessings of free trade and open competition, with machine-turned British manufactures, most of our native arts and industries have been undersold, not only in foreign markets,

but what is more regrettable, even in India itself. And undersold simply ? Everything has been swept out of the board, the tables have been turned, machinery has got the entire market all to itself, and indigenous industries have been swamped. The cunning hands of Indian workmen have now turned to the plough, many of the minor handicrafts have been crushed down, and even the traditions of manufacturing skill are perishing through desuetude. It is the revenge of free trade, and European manufacturing towns are now mercilessly sucking the life-blood of the country. This is the worst of the evil.

In the preceding pages we have tried to establish, our readers know with what success, four very vital propositions

(1) That the permanent excess of our

exports over our imports really means India's impoverishment

(2) That, in return of foreign luxuries and Anglo Indian requirements, we are exporting to other countries the necessaries of our life, with the result that living is yearly getting dearer and above the means of the majority of the Indian people

(3) That, with our raw produce, we are really sending away the fertility of the soil of this country

(4) That, in competition with the outturn of foreign machinery genuine Indian arts and manufactures are dying out

If we have been able to establish any of the above propositions, we think we have made out a strong case against free trade in India

Yet one point still remains to notice

India is a subject country,—England's dependency. To make trade free between the ruler and the ruled, though not exactly contradiction in terms, means imposing some practical disadvantages of a very serious nature upon the latter, which no amount of political morality can see its way to remove. To one of these unavoidable hardships John Stuart Mill draws attention in the following clear words: "A country which makes regular (non-commercial) payments to foreign countries, besides losing what it pays, loses also something more, by the less advantageous terms on which it is forced to exchange its production for foreign commodities . . . The paying country will give a higher price for all that it buys from the receiving country,



while the latter, besides receiving the tribute, obtains the exportable produce of the tributary country at a lower price.\*

Whenever the interests of India and those of England clash,—and there arise unhappily many occasions, when they actually do clash,—experience has shown us that the former invariably give way. The exclusion of cotton-goods from the schedule of the original Tariff Act of 1894 is a case in point. Again, a single magisterial frown, an angry look of a white planter, is sometimes sufficient to change the tide of affairs in a whole District. The history of the Bengal indigo oppressions a quarter of a century ago, and that of the opium cultivation in Behar to-day, will

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\* *Pol. Ec., Bk. iii., Ch. xxi.*

speaking in explanation of what we mean.

Lord Farrar writes: 'The persons who carry on our trade on the outskirts of civilization are not distinguished by a special appreciation of the rights of others. . . . When a difficulty arises between ourselves and one of the weaker nations, these are the persons whose voice is most loudly raised for acts of violence, of aggression, or of revenge . . . Our dealings in the far East, and elsewhere have not always been such as would do 'credit to an honest merchant.' \* And who does not know the reasons of the hot haste in which the Indian Factories Act was hurried through the Legislative anvil? The fact is, we can never forget the truth,

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\* *The State in its Relation to Trade*, 1st Ed., p. 178

that we are living under the mailed heel of England, and under circumstances such as these, free trade loses much of its economic interest. Trade, instead of being free, is fettered in India, and the green-eyed jealousy of commerce is covered only by a thin veil of mock-philanthropy.

To another important point we feel bound to draw the attention of our readers at this point. It is not unknown to them that all stores required by the Government of India have now to be procured by indent on England and no tenders are ever invited for them in this country. The very facts that our Government, even in the face of the good example set by the Colonial Governments in this matter, withdraws its custom from the country in favour of other sources of supply,

that it denies itself the benefit of commercial competition, that it shrinks from throwing the risk of carriage and of stocks upon importers by purchasing supplies in India, local or foreign, that it bears a very heavy exchange for these stores without any demur, that it persistently ignores the claims of local manufactures in spite of its declared wishes and published Resolutions—what do all these and similar other facts go to prove? Surely, nothing if not the monopoly of a few English producers and their influence over the India Office. Does not this smack strongly of protection in favour of those English suppliers who are in the Secretary of State's exclusive list?

And talk of free trade between India and England? 'England's gold and silver

manufactures,' says Sir Richard Garth in his telling little pamphlet, *A few Plain Truths about India*, 'have long been admitted into India duty-free, whilst similar Indian manufactures are still subject in England to a heavy import duty.' He then goes on to instance the export duty on Indian tea and pertinently asks . 'Is this Free Trade? Does 'the duty on Indian coffee or Indian rice savour of Free Trade? . . . But whatever we are, I say, whether Free Traders or Protectionists, let us at least be just and consistent. Let us not adopt Free Trade or Protection to the detriment of India, just as it answers our own purpose for the time being'

The matter deserves to be probed still further. Our free trade Government, like the protectionist Governments of France and

Austria, have no hesitancy in allowing Municipal Boards to add to their revenue by the iniquitous method of octroi. And what is an octroi if not protection in its worst form? Is it consistent, is it fair, is it righteous—to preach free trade on one occasion and run counter to its spirit on another? But ‘a foolish consistency,’ our rulers may say with Emerson, ‘is the hobgoblin of little minds’. Again, it is all but universally known that our Government, besides owning several plantations, such as those of cinchona at Darjiling and in the country round Ootacamund, and of *shushum* in the suburbs of Lahore, have a monopoly of salt, opium, and a variety of intoxicants and drugs. Did not Cobden himself, in his last speech in the British Parliament

inveigh seriously against the practice of a Government turning manufacturer as highly inconsistent with free trade and smelling insidiously of protection? Let them say and write what they like as long as they let me do what I like, once ex-claimed Frederick the Great British India seems to be governed in the same autocratic way

Having shown the effects which free trade has borne and is daily bearing in India let us now see if protection holds a better brief or has anything to offer which may insure a cheerful prospect

The only important avenue by which India can recover a gleam of prosperity and hold a place in the civilised world is the naturalisation of foreign industries and the creation of new, and the revival of

old. ones. But to plant machinery, to acquire a certain amount of competency, and to get over thousand-and-one initial difficulties, all cannot be done in a day. To prevent our industries being unusually handicapped at the start or being strangled in their birth, and to secure for them a long and prosperous life, Government will be required to nurse, foster, and protect them with a tender care. Protectionist or no, it is a sacred and paramount duty of our Government to defend us against the skill and enterprise of European countries during the period of our industrial juvenescence.

That nascent or infant industries always deserve to be protected, is a doctrine about which there is hardly any division of opinion amongst respectable political



economists In his *Political Economy*, John Stuart Mill thus freely expresses himself. 'The superiority of one country over another in a branch of production often arises only from having begun it sooner. There may be no inherent advantage on one part, or disadvantage on the other, but only a present superiority of acquired skill and experience. A country which has this skill and experience yet to acquire, may in other respects be better adapted to the production than those which were

certain loss, introduce a new manufacture, and bear the burthen of carrying it on until the producers have been educated up to the level of those with whom the processes are traditional. A protecting duty, continued for a reasonable time, will sometimes be the least inconvenient mode in which the nation can tax itself for the support of such an experiment.\*

We have weightier support, still, as coming from quite an unexpected quarter. Mr Henry George whose tendency is towards *extremist free trade*, and who can almost be labelled down as a socialist, is the last man in the world to say a kind word for protection. Yet he says, 'It is only in new countries and in the beginnings of the system that the encouragement of in-

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\* *Principles of Political Economy*, Bk 1 ch 1

fant industries can be presented as the sole end of protection ' Again, 'as an abstract proposition it is not, I think, to be denied that there may be industries to which temporary encouragement might profitably be extended Industries capable, in their development, of much public benefit have often to struggle under great disadvantages in their beginnings, and their development might sometimes be beneficially hastened by judicious encouragements \*

Protection yet holds out another promise Political economists of all shades are unanimous that the real strength of protection lies in the fact of its holding out hopes for the employment of those, who, under the present condition of things, do not find work The want of employment of a very

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\* *Protection or Free Trade*, p 104

considerable portion of the population is undeniably one of the most potent causes of our misery. It very frequently happens that, living on a joint family, a household of between 6 to 7 persons have to live upon no more than a couple of ancestral acres. Two or three persons find work in the fields, other sitting idle at home, having nothing worth while to do. The employment of the million is the crying want of India. Though Manchester Insurrections, or French Revolutions, or demonstrations of the Unemployed are things which have no chance of taking place in India, yet slowly and silently a current of discontent is spreading wide among the sons of our plebeian classes which, any day, under peculiar and adverse circumstances, may find expression in terrible outbursts.

If either of the above benefits could be secured or the least of the numerous evils brought on by free trade mitigated protection would then have more than justified itself in this country

One of the strongest arguments against protection ever raised is that it enhances the prices of protected commodities amongst which there may be many prime and daily necessities of life by watching the interests of the producers at the expense of those of the consumers. It is said that France pays rather dearly by protecting its agricultural produce and salt, and the arch protectionist Brother Jonathan, has to bear a remarkably heavy cost for his living for a similar economical orthodoxy. Without entering into any polemics upon

the compensating gains which occasionally result from restricted commerce, it is safe to assert that free trade has done for India; as we have proved before, exactly what protection is feared will do, or have done, elsewhere. We are the perfect antipodes to the American or the French peoples, India being essentially a poor agricultural country where the interests of the consumers and the producers are almost identical and indivisible.

Even when the prices of commodities are raised by protecting home producers against foreign competitors, the consumer, we have no doubt, is the direct sufferer. But a country with untold resources, splendid aptitude for production, and cheap labour—such as India—can shortly make, more than make,

good this loss by rising equal to the occasion which protection creates. It is further alleged that restricted competition offers no incentives to trade and industry and as such should be deprecated as an economical and moral evil. But it is an ugly fact, which we hardly know how English political economists will explain, that it is the introduction, and not exclusion, of competition that has deadened industry and skill in this country. So, looking to the question from all possible views, India has nothing to lose, and much to gain, by an international war of tariffs.

Now let us refer to the testimony of history on this question. When Rome was mistress of the world, when 'the increasing revenue of the provinces was found sufficient to defray the

ordinary establishment of war and government,' when the Roman people 'was for ever delivered from the weight of taxes,' in those halcyon days of Roman prosperity, protection was followed with a certain amount of vengeance. Gibbon tells us: 'In the reign of Augustus and his successors, duties were imposed upon every kind of merchandise. . . . The rate of the customs varied from the eighth to the fortieth part of the value of the commodity . . . that a higher duty was fixed on articles of luxury than on those of necessity, and that the productions raised or manufactured by the labour of the subjects of the Empire were treated with more indulgence than was shown to the pernicious, or at least the unpopular, commerce of Arabia and India'



Grote says that in several of the ancient States of Greece foreign trade was prohibited altogether. And Rome, Thebes, and Athens still bear an historical interest which London, Manchester or Birmingham, or any other big English city can hardly be expected to have a thousand years hence.

Let us now examine the commercial policy of England. We will not go so far back as the 12th century, in which the industrial activities of England 'had developed with a bewildering rapidity', and when the foundations of English enterprise and English commerce were first laid. It would indeed be nothing strange if in those early days of English history, 'producer, merchant, manufacturer saw in "protection" his only hope of wealth or

security'.\* Nor was the rein of protection any bit slackened when in 1496 the *Inter-cursus Magnus* was concluded between Henry VII. and Maximilian for the encouragement of trade between England and the Netherlands. Adam Smith, in his encyclopedic work on the *Wealth of Nations*, gives us a list of articles which had secured a monopoly in the market of England so late as the latter end of the last century. Butcher's meat, corn, woollens, silk manufactures, not to mention other articles, all enjoyed monopoly and protection to an extent which it is difficult to realise a hundred years afterwards. 'Even so late as 1824,' writes Mr. Mongredian, the author of the *History of the Free Trade Movement*, 'there was hardly any article ob-

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\* *Henry II*, By Miss J R Green, p 45

tainable from abroad that was admissible here (England) without the payment of import duties, always heavy, sometimes excessive, and in certain cases all but prohibitory.'

Mr. Lecky, in his *Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland*, describes how England promoted her own interests by first excluding Irish cattle in 1660, secondly by 'an Act of crushing and unprecedented severity,' carried in 1699, completely and irretrievably annihilating woollen manufactures in Ireland. 'From Queen Elizabeth's reign, writes Lord Dufferin, 'until within a few years all the known and authorised commercial confraternities of Great Britain never for a moment relaxed their relentless grip on the trades of Ireland.'

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\* *Irish Emigration and the Tenure of Land in Ireland*, p. 129.

The cotton manufacturer the sugar refiner, the soap and candle maker, all duly found their articles declared contraband in England. The Levant the ports of Europe, and the oceans beyond the Cape were forbidden by a Parliament of Charles II to the flag of Ireland. William III King of England, promised openly in 1698, in reply to an Address from Parliament *'to discourage Irish and promote English trade'* <sup>1</sup>

From 1676 when cotton first began to be manufactured in England for over a century, the nascent industry of cotton manufactures had to be protected and fostered by a succession of Statutes prohibiting the use of imported cotton. An Act passed in the Parliament of Great Britain in 1700 forbade the wear and use

of 'all wrought silks, Bengals, and stuffs mixed with silk or herba, of the manufacture of China, Persia, or the East Indies, and all calicoes, painted, dyed, printed or stained there.' Hargreave's invention of the spinning-jenny, Arkwright's discovery of the spinning-frame, the introduction of spinning by rollers and many additional discoveries and improvements in the processes of carding, roving, and spinning notwithstanding, these protective measures continued to be in force for many a long year. Only when improved machinery began to turn out a greater quantity of goods than the English people required to consume among themselves, and the prices of corn had sufficiently advanced owing to the failure of the soil to meet the

home demand, that the British nation woke up to see the economic advantages of free trade. Thus, after building its prosperity by centuries of protection and secure in its own strength, England now comes forward as a Herculean combatant and challenges all the world to enter the lists against her. Selfishness can never be the spring of a generous and wise policy.

Probably no part of the world is to-day more civilised and prosperous than the United States of America. And everybody, down to a schoolgirl knows that the United States, far from repudiating or discarding, is, on the contrary, quite a stronghold of, protection. 'Foreign articles', writes Mrs Fawcett, 'whether necessities or luxuries, are mercilessly taxed' Besides articles of every-day use,

iron, steel, and textile industries are still protected by the Yankee Government. Protection is very much advocated there in order to foster manufactures, and one American school of political economists goes still further. Horace Greeley mentions the names of more than a dozen of Americans of note who champion not the maintenance, but the *creation*, of home manufactures.\*

Professor Bryce, in his splendid history of the *American Commonwealth*, thus delivers himself on this head in the very interesting chapter on the 'Congressional Finance' 'The primary object of customs duties has for many years past been not the raising of revenue but the protection of American industries by subjecting foreign

\* *Political Economy*, p. 34

products to a very high tariff. At present there are enormous duties on many classes of raw materials, and on nearly all classes of manufactured goods, including even books and works of art.' In Part III of his book he devotes a chapter to the 'Parties of To-day' wherein he further states: 'The party (Democratic) trumpet has often given an uncertain sound, for Pennsylvania is Protectionist on account of its iron industries; northern Georgia and southern Tennessee are tending that way for the same reason; Louisiana is inclined to protection on account of its sugar; so forth.'

According to Mulhall's statistical table, which we quote at the close of this book, the average earning of the people of Australia much exceeds that of any other people in



the world And the rising colonies between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans are now the envy and the admiration of the civilised world Though belonging to the English stock generally it is curious to observe how they have unlearned many of the precious lessons and stock theories of English political economy Sir Charles Dilke,—and he is probably the most respectable authority on colonial affairs in England —says in his *Problems of Greater Britain* ‘In Greater Britain I pointed out that colonial Protection was not only strong but growing and that it had in Victoria and Canada the support of many extremely able and intelligent men who were perfectly convinced protectionists while throughout the colonies there was a rapidly increasing minority

in its favour. Since that time the whole of the great self-governing colonies, except New South Wales and the Cape have become protectionist, while the Cape has heavy duties upon most goods, put on, however, mainly for revenue purpose, but now beginning to give rise to a growth of protectionist opinion ; and in New South Wales the free traders hold their own only by a bare majority.' Elsewhere he says : 'It cannot, I think, be denied that the effect of the Victorian protective system has been to enable the colony to gradually ' supply its wants with a better class of Victorian goods.' We are further told that 'the Protection party has in South Australia won the day,' that 'there does not appear to be a real Free Trade party in Queensland,' that 'the year 1888 was

marked by a distinct advance in the direction of Protection in New Zealand,' all going to show that protection and prosperity go hand in hand all over Australia.

The economical apostasy of Germany is probably the hardest blow dealt against free trade in the present century. The German Confederation had been so much in advance in commercial freedom that the Prussian policy inaugurated in 1818 was held up by William Huskisson 'as a pattern to England and the world.' In 1865, Prussia threw off nearly all commercial restraints, and when the Empire was founded free trade received a further stimulus. But in 1879 Bismarck recanted, the economic evils from which Germany was suffering having been made patent ere long, and returned to the time-honoured ways of 1823

and 1865', maintaining that only by stringent measures of protection could the national market be preserved for native industry and agriculture. Since 1879, Germany has revised her tariffs on many occasions with a view to increase them, and the question is has her protective system succeeded? Let us have an English free trader Mr Dawson, answer this. 'There can be no doubt whatever that the revision of Germany's economic system has tended to encourage her industry and increase her trade'\* Mr Dawson attributes the success of this change to the facts that Germany had 'industries to create and trade to build up, and that in practical experience and genius for business she was not yet in a position to compete with older rivals.

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\* *Bismarck and State Socialism* p. 60

In the preceding pages we have set forth in some detail the evil effects which have followed the adoption of a free trade policy in this country, we have seen how our immediate material salvation lies greatly in measures of protection, and lastly we have placed before our readers the evidence of contemporary history in favour of raising tariff walls against foreign trade. That free trade has failed in India no careful observer would care to deny, that protection deserves a trial every one will admit. Yet of platitudes and rhodomontades about the talismanic virtues of free trade Anglo-Indian literature is more than full, on the evils of protection every writer waves warm and eloquent. Really free trade and protection are categories of time and place. It is a question of expediency, not of natural law.

Free trade is only possible between free peoples, and between nations that are industrious, self reliant and self governing. To take the abstract principles of political economy and apply them cut and dried in a country, without considering its sociological conditions, is often attended with results which the wildest optimist will look back with regret.

Our experiences of free trade give the lie direct to the asseverations of English economists while the experiences of America Australia and the whole of the Continent of Europe unite to show how erroneous is their complacent dogmatism. The calico millennium is yet as far removed from us as the social millennium. England truly speaking is the only free trade country in this world, and we

have been made to follow suit. British free trade—the substitution of a revenue for a protective tariff—is a sorry misnomer. It is veritably a ‘bagman’s millennium’, and falls far short of the ideal formed by Quesnay, Turgot, and Condorcet a century ago.

Free trade is chiefly regarded and advocated as a mere extension of the principle of division of labour, and for the special adaptability of a country for the production of a certain class of commodities. A more acceptable principle it would be next to impossible to find out in the whole range of political economy. but there is nothing in it to recommend free trade getting into vogue in India, as India is a microcosm where division of labour is already assured by the distinction of

castes and occupations, and by the rigorous enforcement of the laws of trade guilds. There is nothing again under the sun, nothing that man requires for his food, clothing, and shelter, which could not be grown, produced, or manufactured here, and make her people totally independent of foreign goods. Every conceivable variation of temperature is to be found in India, and Nature has also been prodigal enough to bestow upon the soil the capacity for growing all sorts of plants and crops and upon the country particular facilities for producing all manner of commodities. Dr. George Watt has recently shown that a numberless variety of foreign plants and fruits, besides trees of various description, have been very successfully reared in India within living memory.



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Nor are the hands of the Indian artisans incapable of turning out all that we want, either in the shape of necessities or luxuries of life. As Sir John Strachey said in 1878, 'India, by the extent and favourable conditions of its territory, is capable of producing almost every article required for the use of man.' A sea-girt island-like Britain, where man has to struggle against Nature at almost every turn is entirely differently situated from India. What may be good for the one, may not be quite wholesome for the other. If Bondini, Leopold and Fossombroni were to reappear in this world to-day and study English and Indian economics, they would certainly find more to regret, than congratulate themselves upon, for having broached the idea of free trade at all. The commercial

policy known as free trade has been a god-send to the one, but is proving a ruin to the other. Different nations have always different histories to tell.

Again, undeveloped nations must not be expected to run a neck-and-neck race with nations that have reached a high state of development. England is unquestionably the most prosperous manufacturing country in the world, and India, 'as a manufacturing country is not yet out of her tutelage,' as her present Finance Minister tells us. The idea, therefore, of free trade between India and England, or any highly developed European country, has something of the pitiable as well as of the ludicrous in it. As well might we talk of a fair fight between a cat in a cage and a lion at

large, or conceive of a competition between an electric railway and a hansom cab

Why, then, we may reasonably ask, is free trade forced upon us, an occidental nostrum crammed down the oriental throat? Is there not such a thing as British fairness or political morality? And how long shall our sensible and enlightened countrymen continue to grovel in the dust, comfortably ensconced in a belief of our increasing prosperity, now fighting for a shadow, then for a fig?

The question of questions, however, remains, shamefully neglected—shall India continue to drag her miserable existence as a mere draw-farm and scapegoat of England?

## INDIAN ARTS AND MANUFACTURES

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It is a fashion with our rulers to compare India under British rule with what it was under the Great Mogul, and tell us how the former is prospering while the latter was bound to go to Jericho. There is nothing so easy as to kick at a dead lion, but if facts were presented in their true colour, probably Moslem rule in India would compare very favourably, as far, at least, as the poverty question is concerned, with the dismal prospects of British Administration.

Granted, taxation was carried with vengeance under Mogul domination ; granted there were many vexatious imposts of a

personal character in those days ; granted, there were no remissions of land revenue or any organised relief works in times of distress. Admitting all these for argument's sake, Mahometan rule has still hardly anything to lose by a comparison with the proud traditions of Anglo-Indian government. For, the simple fact that native industries were most earnestly and judiciously encouraged and patronised by those Asiatic despots, would alone outweigh in the balance all those humanitarian and philanthropic doctrines which our British bureaucrats want to take so much credit for.

“From the *Ayin Akbari*, or the Institutes of the Emperor Akbar, written by Abul Fazl, we learn that the Mogul Emperors of Delhi maintained in their palaces and

1 courts skilled workmen from every part of India. It is said that Akbur took a great delight in painting, and had in his service a large number of artists, in order that they 'might vie with each other in fame, and become eminent by their productions.' Once a week he inspected the work of every artist, when in proportion to their individual merits, they were honoured with premiums, and their regular salaries were increased. In the armoury also the Emperor personally superintended the preparation of the various weapons which were forged and decorated there, in every stage of their manufacture. In the workshop of the imperial wardrobe the weavers and embroiderers of every country were to be found and whatever was made by them was carefully kept, and those

articles of which there thus came in time to be a superfluity were given away in presents of honour. Through the attention of the Emperor, the manufacture of various new fabrics was established at Delhi. The skill of the imperial manufactures increased also with their number, so that the cloths of Persia, Europe and China became drugs in the market. The emperor was very fond of woollen stuffs, particularly shawls, and the *Ajın Akbari* gives a list of all the varieties made in the palace which were classified according to their date value, colour and weight. He had a vast establishment of jewellers inlayers in gold, silver, crystal, and cornelian, damascene workers, chiefly for ornamenting arms, enamellers, plain workers in gold and silver, and pierced workers, embossers,



‘inlayers with little grains of gold , makers of gold and silver lace for sword belts, &c , engravers and workers in a sort of *niello* , stone engravers, and lapidaries , and other artists”\*

This was the sort of encouragement which kept up Indian handicrafts alive and in an exceedingly thriving condition even long after the pageantry of the Delhi Court had ceased to be

To-day, after a century of British rule, the cry throughout the length and breadth of this peninsula is that native industries are declining, indigenous arts and manufactures dying. This cry did not originate in the Indian National Congress Camp, or from any body of interested or discontented Indians, but was raised and has been

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\* *The Industrial Arts of India*, pp. 141, 142

re-echoed by men whose names are respected by all sections of people in this vast Empire.

Sir George Birdwood, than whom a better authority it would be impossible to find on this subject, raises this note of wail in his excellent essay on *The Industrial Arts of India*, and shows conclusively how greatly has India suffered from the decay of her native manufactures. Sir Alexander Cunningham and Messrs Fergusson and Harrington—all excellent authorities on Indian architecture, sculpture and the allied arts—follow up this note in no uncertain tone. Sir James Caird and Dr. George Watt—names not less known in India—are not slow in admitting that everywhere native workmen and artists are getting out of employment. And Mr.

Professor J H Balfour, whom Dr Muir takes as an authority on the subject, supposes cotton to have been indigenous in India Panini, the oldest Sanskrit grammarian mentions cotton Cotton is largely grown everywhere in India, and besides meeting home demand, several million tons of Indian cotton are exported to Lancashire every year The plains of Guzerat and Kathiawar, and the deep valleys of the Central Provinces and Berar are the principal cotton growing tracts in India Dr Witt in his *Economic Products of India*, speaks of numberless varieties of Indian cotton After New Orleans, Bombay is the greatest cotton port in the world

Cotton weaving is an immemorial industry in India Nothing suits the genius of the Indian artisan classes better than

this department of labour. The spinning-wheel and the country loom, so accurately described by Mr Grierson in his *Bihar Peasant Life*, were invented in India before Homer sang his *Iliad*. *Sindon*, the Greek name for cotton goods, is a slight phonetic deviation from *Sind*, the name of the country watered by the Indus. The Hebrew *kapas* is derived from the Sanskrit *karṇṇa* (cotton), and everybody knows that the European *calico* is derived from Calicut, a town on the Malabar coast once famous for its historical cotton goods. 'India,' says Sir G. Birdwood, "was probably the first of all countries that perfected weaving and the art of its gold brocades and filmy muslins, 'comely as the curtains of Solomon,' is even older than the Code of Manu. Weaving is frequently

alluded to in the Ved is ' In ancient days, India not only clothed all her people with her own cotton, but the European including the small British, demand for cotton-goods or calicoes before the seventeenth century was met by importations from India itself' A considerable portion of the population—nearly a sixth—have always *lived upon the weaving trade from the days of the Aryan Conquest down to quite recent times*

Things have changed very much now, Sir William Hunter says 'the tide of circumstances has compelled the Indian weaver to exchange his loom for the plough' There is no class, exclaims Sir James Caird 'which our rule has pressed harder upon than the native weaver and artisan Hand weaving is everywhere

languishing in the unequal competition with Manchester and the Presidency Mills, is Sir George Birdwood's opinion. Another most careful writer on India Mr J S Cotton says 'Lancashire has attained its pre eminence by annihilating the indigenous industry—first by prohibitive duties in England and then by the competition of machinery' The forced extinction of the weaving industry there fore sufficiently accounts for much of the poverty of our lower classes, as well as the importation of shiploads of cotton goods into India

The decline of this industry is said to date from the cotton famine following the American War of 1862, when the high price of the staple broke down the local weaving trade in various parts of the

country. But with cheapness of production in Lancashire, due to improvements in machinery, and with the freedom of international commerce, the fate of Indian cottons has practically been sealed. Our government is sacrificing before the altar of the textile industry of Lancashire the living of millions of Indian people with an easy conscience. To Lancashire mill-hands has fallen the task of covering our nakedness, and consequently Lancashire thrives at the cost of the Indian weaver. This was fated to be so; for 'protection' is a hated term and a discredited principle with the followers of the Manchester School who have the upper hand in the administration of the British Empire at the present day.

Yet the cotton manufactures of the

Jullandar Doab in the Punjab, of Jaipore and Jodhpore in Rajputana, of Ahmedabad, Surat, Broach, Poona, Nassik, Guzerat in the Presidency of Bombay, of Nagpore, Chanda, and Hosangabad in the Central Provinces, of Arni, Masulipatam, Vizagapatam, and Nellore in the Madras Presidency, and of Dacca, Sarail (Tipperah), Santipore (Nadiya), and Chandernagore in Bengal, and all who make use of the higher 'counts' of yarn, are still holding their own even in an unequal contest with the cheap goods of Manchester. Though cotton-weaving has not yet become a lost art in India, the relentless competition with British cotton fabrics threatens to sweep it away within a measurable distance of time. In the last census, the total number of people returned as workers in cotton



and flax in India was only about 5,500,000 and it is remarkable that the bulk of them are females.

Amongst textile fabrics, silk goods deserve a prominent mention. India has always been famous for her brocades, and frequent allusion is made in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* to 'fine silken vestures.' It is maintained by Birdwood that her *kincobs* were worn by Ulysses, Helen of Troy, Solomon, Queen Esther, and Herod. When Herod delivered his last oration to the merchants of Tyre and Sidon, Josephus tells us, he was dressed in an Indian cloth of silver, well-known as *ruperi*. For over eighteen centuries, European kings, queens, and princes, not to speak of Asiatic monarchs, have taken a delight in possessing some of the best specimens of

Indian silk manufactures, either pure or worked with gold and silver, such as *chand-tara* (moon and stars), *mazchar* (ripples of silver) *dup chan* (sunshine and shade), *bulbul chasm* (nightingale's eyes), *murgala* (peacock's neck), and *shikargah* (the hunting grounds) Macaulay has recorded that 'from the looms of Benares went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the balls of St James's and of the *Petit Trianon*' But ever since Europe began to manufacture silk on her own account and export a large assortment of silk goods to India, the indigenous industry has been fast disappearing As soon as silk weavers can find a different opening in life, they have in many cases been found to abandon their old profession Though the prospect of sericulture is brightening

up, the art of weaving silk, on the other hand, is perceptibly decaying. Mixed fabrics of silk are still extensively woven here and there in the country, but in this vast Empire there exists at the present day less than half-a-dozen places, such as Benares, Murshidabad, Ahmedabad, and Trichinopoly where the finer fabrics of pure silk are still turned out.

Speaking of weaving, it is impossible to forget the shawl industry of Cashmere. The beginnings and history of this branch of weaving are shrouded in considerable obscurity, but there can be no question as to its great antiquity. The 'woollen stuff' mentioned by Valmiki, forming part of the trousseau of Sita, the model of Hindu wives, is supposed by Heeren (*Historical Researches*) to have been nothing else

but a Cashmere shawl. Be that as it may, there was a time when, besides several castes of embroiderers, 30,000 shawl looms were barely sufficient to meet the extraordinary demand for this fabric. The superlative excellence of these manufactures—some of which for the delicacy and evanescence of their texture received the poetical names of ‘falling water’ and ‘liquid sunshine.’—recommended itself alike to the European and the Indian taste. French designs and aniline dyes have, however, a long time since corrupted the quality of these shawls, and to-day there can scarcely be found a dozen artisans in all the Happy Valley who can still ‘portray on their work the sinuosities of the river Jhelum.’

Before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870, France was one of the

largest buyers of Cashmere shawls. The agents of some of the large houses of London, Paris, and Vienna still vie with one another for the purchase of the best specimens of this commodity in Amritsar, the emporium of all Cashmere goods. But it is for over twenty years that this noble industry, to which Mr. Caine refers in his *Picturesque India* as 'one of the most skilled crafts in the world,' has been steadily declining, and most of our readers will be painfully surprised to read the following, taken from an issue of the *Indian Daily News* of last year. 'Hundreds of people, who are weavers by trade, find no employment, and the misery of privation and suffering is driving them to crime, since the means of honest livelihood have disappeared. The old-time industrious

Kashmiri embroiderer and weaver is fast becoming a professional burglar—and all for want of work.'

Do not those of us who are neither prejudiced nor purblind, feel how many thousands of Indians are annually getting out of employment, and how the overwhelming importation of foreign manufactures is bringing wholesale ruin on native weavers? Are our eyes shut to the increasing miseries of the classes which once were in a fairly thriving condition, and now, according to the Famine Commission, the foremost to require relief during times of scarcity? And we do not seem to realise the perils to which society is exposed owing to this economical revolution amongst us. But perhaps, we all pay homage to the fetish of free trade, and,

we are afraid, we are crying in the wilderness To-day we may heed not, our fads may be superior to all considerations, but sooner or later, the Nemesis must come and we or the generations to come shall have to pay very heavily for our present parasitical passiveness

And what is true of the weaver is also true of the carpenter and the turner, the mason and the bricklayer, the embroiderer the dyer, the jeweller the lapidary, the brazier, the potter, the architect the sculptor, and a hundred other different sorts of artisans In short all native arts and industries, except the tilling of the soil which the white man knows too well to be only a starving occupation have been swamped by foreign competition

We are told by political economists that

no one ought to grumble against cheap foreign goods, for, like the celestial beings of which we read in the *Arabian Nights* they always rain blessings upon the people to whose doors they come. Again, the importation of foreign articles is never possible without an effectual demand. These are mere truisms, for cheapness is both an advantage and attraction, especially in a country like India, where the difference of a few pies always means much, and the demand for cheap foreign goods, therefore, follows as a matter of course. But the cheapness that handicaps, paralyses, and ultimately starves native industries, and throws millions of people either out of employment or upon the land, and like a loose heap of dynamite threatens to undermine the very exis-



tence of society, is indeed bought at a dearer price than many of us can form a just estimate of. What a fool's paradise we are living in at the present moment !

There are so many classes of artisans that are turning to agriculture now-a-days, that it might almost be predicted that in another century or two India shall have to depend upon foreign countries wholly for all necessities of life, excepting only, perhaps, the food-grains. The shadow of death has fallen upon every genuine Indian industry, and their ultimate disappearance is only a question of time.

This is a dismal foreboding, and the question which most seriously confronts the Indian thinker of to-day is how to prevent this state coming off.

That arts and manufactures are most

potent factors in the creation of wealth, is a fact that goes without saying. It is one of the established theories of Social Science that a nation of agriculturists will always compare most unfavourably with a nation of artisans and manufacturers. A study of the economic condition of modern Europe and that of India, a comparison of the England of to-day with the England of the Druids, will dispel all doubts on this head from the minds of even the most sceptically disposed. Moreover, it is a positive danger to society when most of its members have to depend upon the land alone for their living. Crime and distress have everywhere followed a glut of agricultural population. And in India about 80 per cent. of the people are agriculturists, and only 9 per cent.

are employed in factories and handicrafts

To revive all the dying Indian industries, and introduce into the country some of the thriving ones from the West and relieve agriculture of its redundant labourers will come uppermost in the minds of all sensible men as probably the one and the best solution of the present difficulty. How to accomplish this object is the next most important question, and upon its solution depends to a great extent the future of the population of this unhappy land.

There are a hundred diverse classes of artisans and labourers at this moment in India whose fate seems to be well-nigh trembling in the balance, and who but for some timely encouragement may be heard of

no more. The jeweller's work of Vizagapatam, Trichinopoly, Mysore, Lucknow, and Cashmere, the gold and silver work of the above places and of Cutch, Guzerat, and of many parts of Madras and of Bengal, the silver filigree work of Cuttack, Dacca, and Murshidabad, the printing of muslins with patterns of gold and silver leaf at Jaipore and Hyderabad, the gold and silver wire-making of Lucknow and Poona, the enamelling of Jaipore and Partabghurh, the iron work of the Punjab, Monghyr, Vizianagram, and Ahmedabad, the steel weapons of Nagpore, the cutlery of Peshawar, Burdwan, Wazirpore (Barisal), and of Samkur (Madras), the damascening (*kofstgiri*) of Cashmere and Sialkote, the bidari-work of Ahmedabad, the mosaic work of Agra, the gem engraving of Delhi,

the brazen and copper ware of Benares, Madura, Nellore, Tanjore, Brahmapuri (Chanda, C. P.), Poona, and Nassik, the *khagrai* (bell-metal) ware of Murshidabad, Chittagong, and Kagmary (Mymensingh), the *tarkashi* of Mainpuri (N. W. P.), the agate and onyx ornaments of Cambay, the garnet jewellery of Jaipore, the pebble work of Jubbulpore, the glazed earthenware of Multan, Lahore and Peshawar, the porcelain of Delhi, the ivory work of Amritsar, Benares and Travancore, the wood-carving of Bombay, Surat, Ahmadabad, Sagar and Nagpore, the embroidery of Cashmere, Sindh, Guzerat, Ludhiana, Delhi, Patna, and Aurangabad, the carpet and rug of Lahore, Amritsar, Agra, Benares, Mirzapore, Jubbulpore, Warangal, Malabar, Salem, Masulipatam,

and Tanjore, the jute-weaving of Purniah and Dinajpore, the cane work of Chittagong, not to mention the thousand and one local specialties in inlaying, ivory-carving, clay figures, lac and leather work, and various other miscellaneous small wares as trinketry and toys, are genuine Indian arts manufactures that are slowly dying out for want of due encouragement.

Says Mr J S Cotton in his article on *India* contributed to the *English Citizen Series* "carpet making, fine embroidery, jewellery, metal-work, the damascening of arms, saddlery, carving, paper-making, even architecture and sculpture, have all alike decayed. In some cases the change is to be regretted, not only as impairing the social economy, but as an absolute loss to the artistic treasures of the world

Processes have been forgotten, and hereditary aptitudes have fallen into disuse, which can never now be restored. An India supplying England with its raw products, and in its turn dependent upon England for all its more important manufactures, is not a picture that we can expect the Indians to contemplate with entire satisfaction.' Some publications by Messrs F. Fawcett and L. Kipling that have already been announced are expected to show, we have been informed, what a mine of culture and tradition ennobles Indian handicrafts, 'each of which was based on a science, literature, and mythology of its own, and has been, or is being, destroyed by the intervention of Europeans, *whether as rivals in trade or as mistaken reformers.*'

It is difficult to form an accurate idea of what the artistic and aesthetic world has lost in the decay of Indian handicrafts, for the manipulative dexterity of the Indian artisan has neither been surpassed nor equalled elsewhere in the world. Dr. Forbes Watson says : 'with all our machinery and wondrous appliances, we have hitherto been unable to produce a fabric which for *fineness* or utility can equal the 'woven-air' of Dacca.' Mr. Drury Fortnum, reporting on the pottery at the International Exhibition of London held in the year 1871, makes the following just observation : 'It is not for Europeans to establish schools of art, in a country the productions of whose remote districts are a school of art in themselves, far more capable of teaching than of being



taught.\* And from a material standpoint, the decline of these handicrafts has a sadder story to tell. Sir George Birdwood informs us that in return for the works of our handicraftsmen the whole world, from the remotest times down to the last century, has been ceaselessly pouring its bullion into India. Another distinguished Indian authority, Sir Alfred Lyall, says : 'From the days of the Romans up to our own time the Indian trade has drained the gold and silver of Europe.' And now that those handicrafts have been doomed, and machinery and competition have run down all our local manufactures, India has become one of the poorest countries in the world, and now 'none so poor to do her reverence.'

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Writing so early as in the middle of the

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\* Quoted by Sir George Birdwood.

seventeenth century, Terry observes in his *Voyage to the East Indies* ( 1655 ) 'The truth is that the natives of India are the best apes for imitation in the world, so full of ingenuity, that they will make any new thing by pattern, how hard soever it seems to be done , and therefore it is no marvel if the natives there make shoes, boots clothes, linen, bands, and cuffs of our English pattern, which are all of them very much different for their fashions and habits, and yet make them exceedingly neat' Though this skill yet remains every where in the land dormant and rusting under neglect opportunities seldom appear to show it to any advantage on any large scale. It is an irony of fate that our people, possessing as they do all this skill and knowledge, should go a begging from

country to country for even the barest necessities of life. 'The spirit of fine art,' says Sir G. Birdwood, 'is indeed everywhere latent in India, but it has yet to be quickened again into operation'

But to revive all our dying arts and skill should not be our whole programme, nor the only goal we ought to aim at. With the general spread of European ideas and civilisation amongst us, our wants have been multiplied, new needs have been created, and what once were religiously eschewed by our fathers as objectionable luxuries have become to us almost indispensable necessities of our improved style of living. However much we may regret this departure from the life of pristine and arcadian simplicity our fathers used to live, we have no escape

from the altered conditions of modern life. The regret is only that all these new demands have now to be met by articles manufactured in the United Kingdom or in the Continent, in short, everywhere but in India. This, it hardly need be told, is a state of things against which a bold and decided stand ought to be made ; and the sooner it is made the better for the hapless population of this country. Strenuous endeavours must, therefore, be made to create industries and open manufactories all over the land sufficiently capable of standing competition with European rivals. It is a great reproach to our society that no such effort has as yet been made on a large scale, and the few enterprises that have succeeded can be counted at the finger's ends.

There is enough capital in the land that it might be most beneficially utilised for such reproductive purposes. Money invested in founding factories and organising industries will not only be found to pay the capitalist rather handsomely, but will be a distinct national gain. We ought not only to see that our materials, such as cotton and jute, silk and wool, hides and skins are worked up here with our own money and by our own people, but our cutlery and perfumery, our boots, shoes, and slippers, our umbrellas, papers, and pencils and the thousand and one other items of our modern requirements are supplied by home manufactures. It has been our pride that India in the past clothed her entire people with her own cotton manufactures, and let this again

• be our boast in the near as well as remote future. Let India also make a determined attempt to supply her people with all that they may require by way either of necessities or luxuries, of life. She must work up her own raw materials, utilise her own economic products, and turn all her indigenous resources to some account. That is the way she may expect to regain her position in the world once more.

However disadvantageously might India be circumstanced in all other respects, there can be no denying the fact that inexhaustible sources of wealth are everywhere awaiting the hand of man to be turned into gold. All that we may ask of her,—minerals, food-stuffs, animal products, dyeing materials, oily and fibrous substances, medicinal herbs and plants,—she will most

*profusely and ungrudgingly yield to us*  
Not that they are turned to no account or wasted, or are left uncared for or totally escape European eyes now, but the hands of her own people are wanting to bring her unlimited resources to make their due contribution to the national wealth

In these contemplated industries we shall *necessarily have to depend upon machinery to a great extent* For good or for evil, machinery has entered extensively into our social economy, where its position is now more than assured and it is unprofitable as well as unwise to cavil against anything which saves time and abridges labour Ruskin's vehement denunciations of all sorts of machinery read like a message of irrationalism in this industrial age Mr Babbage has shown conclusively in his

well-known treatise on *Economy of Machinery and Manufactures* how the former increases production and economises labour. We must take to its use largely if we are to avert or postpone our manufactures being swept away by the 'besom of free trade' The demands of civilisation would seem to require that art should be sacrificed to speed, and quality to quantity In these days of unrestricted competition and of desperate struggle for existence, when national superiority is measured by the out-turn of factories India has hardly any choice left but to submit to the inevitable Side by side with improved handicrafts, factories and mills must rear their heads everywhere in India However much we may try to cry down the use of steam, however



greatly we may deplore the harm it is believed to have done to manual arts, there can be no gainsaying the fact that unto the people of India, the out turn of machinery have come as a blessing for which we cannot be sufficiently thankful

Machinery worked by steam was first introduced into India at a Bombay cotton mill in 1854. In the course of 40 years since that date, has cropped up in almost every large centre of Indian trade, specially in the suburbs of the Presidency towns, a pretty large number of factories sending forth their tall chimney stalks high up in the skies. Specially after the opening of the Suez Canal the application of steam power has rapidly developed in India. The following table has been prepared to show the nature, number, and

• other necessary particulars of the mills now working in India.

Nature of Mills	No	Looms	Daily average of mill hands	Money invested
				Rs.
Cotton Mills ...	125*	23,845	111,998	120,000,000
Jute Mills ...	26	8,300	61,911	35,000,000
Woollen Mills ...	5	526	2,164	2,475,000

Besides these, there are about half-a-dozen paper mills and quarter-of-a-dozen leather factories in all India. There are also a few corn-grinding mills and sugar factories in this country.

\* The figures for 1893 give us 130 cotton mills in all India. They are distributed as follows : 89 in Bombay, 11 in Madras, 8 in Bengal, 5 in the North-West Provinces, 5 in the Central Provinces, 3 in Hyderabad, 2 in the Punjab, and the rest, 7, in the Native States and French Settlements.

Except the cotton mills which are the property of joint-stock companies, and in which Indians have taken up a large number of shares, most of these factories are owned by European capitalists.

Such a vast country as British India with an area of about 944,108 English squares miles, and with a population of more than double that which, according to Gibbon, obeyed Imperial Rome, and which is seven times as large as that of Great Britain and Ireland put together,—such a wide empire has only about 160 mills, while the United Kingdom—comparatively a mere patch of land—has alone over 7,000 textile factories, more than 2,500 of which are devoted only to the purpose of manufacturing cotton. Mr. Thomas Ellison of Liverpool is quoted in the

• *Statesman's Year Book* of 1892 to say that 'the total amount of capital employed is about £200,000,000 and at least 5,000,000 people—men, women, and children—are dependent upon these industries for their livelihood. Moreover, one-half of the value of British and Irish products exported consists of textiles' Would it not be very much profitable for our patriots to spend a good half hour upon this comparison and contrast ?

• Of American industries let us also give a glimpse here to our readers by way of contrast. One of the many steel and iron factories there, the Illinois Steel Company of Chicago, turns out in a year finished product amounting to 700,000 tons, and the wages paid to the mill-hands during the course of a twelve months amount to over

£1,200,000. There is one tin factory which turns out 800,000 cans daily. All the work in this factory is done by self-acting machinery which cut the tin plate, shape the cans, lay over the seams, attach the tops and the bottoms, solder them, test them for leakages, count them, and would our readers believe, deliver them into warehouses for storage and into waggons for shipment. The Baldwin Locomotive Works of Philadelphia produce 'from 800 to 900 engines per annum. A second-rate district, Birmingham, yields 20,000 tons of coal and 2,200 tons of iron every day from its mines. The district of Pittsburg is supplied daily with 750,000,000 feet of 'natural' gas, through 1,125 miles of pipe, saving annually the price of 8,000,000 tons of coal which otherwise would have been required

• for the production of so much gas. And all our readers must have heard of the daring feat of engineering skill which has undertaken to utilise one of the wildest forces of nature for the service of man, namely, to make the falls of the Niagara drive an endless number of mills and factories. These are, we hope, sufficient to give our readers an insight into the unsurpassed activities of the New World.

But the earnest we have already got in this country is not disheartening. The Indian cotton mills, though fighting against enormous odds, consume to-day, our readers will, no doubt, be much gratified to learn, nearly 40 per cent. of the total production of cotton of this country. 'Having wrested,' Whittaker tells us, 'the markets of China and Japan to a large extent from England,'

the Bombay mill owners are now successfully competing for the markets of Eastern Africa, of Aden, of Ceylon and of the Straits Settlements' This is indeed a glorious record for an infant industry

The half a-dozen paper mills are also doing excellent work The success of the Bally mills is a guarantee that similar enterprises are also bound to prosper Addressing the students of a local college, a Madras merchant said a few years ago 'India pays Europe every year about 50 lakhs for paper alone Every Rupee of that money ought to be kept in this country Material for making far more paper than India wants is rotting away in your jungles, your fields, by your roadsides India should sell paper instead of buying it' The Banana plant to be met with all

round the sea-board from Burmah to Madras, and the red cotton-tree yield excellent material for paper manufacture. Bamboo is also an excellent paper-making material.

Mention has also been made of the few leather factories. It is scarcely possible that these can work the enormous supply of the best tanning materials to be obtained in India. For, will our readers believe that hides and skins worth about 500 lakhs of Rupees are exported every year from India to England, to be made into leather there?

Except in the fact that the jute mills are exclusively owned by Europeans, we have every thing to rejoice about Indian jute manufactures. Not only does Calcutta supply bagging for the whole of India, but



we are told 'gunny-weaving is perhaps the single Indian manufacture that has secured a great foreign market.' Mr. O'Connor, in one of his *Reviews of Indian Trade* hopes that 'India will be able, not only to supplant the manufactures of Dundee in the American and other foreign markets, but to supply England herself with bags more cheaply than they can be made in Dundee.'

Besides these, the Famine Commissioners urged upon the attention of trained experts 'the manufacture and refining of sugar ; the manufacture of fabrics of cotton, wool, and silk ; the preparations of fibres of other sorts, and of tobacco ; the manufacture of pottery, glass, soap, oil, and candles.' The manufacture of textile fabrics from fibre-producing plants might be highly

, successful. Curing of tobacco and the manufacture of drugs and medicines might also be tried.

Nor should the making of umbrellas and lucifer matches be considered wholly beneath our endeavour. Nothing in the whole domain of manufacture is easier than the turning out of these. In 1893-94 we imported matches worth about 38 lakhs, and umbrellas worth over 48 lakhs. We need hardly observe that the trade on these commodities is showing a marked expansion every year, and yet, it is strange, they have not been able to draw Indian capitalists.

Attention might also be profitably diverted to the many scattered reefs of gold-bearing quartz, to the very rich and pure iron ores abundant in the Madras Presi-

dency, to the several coal-fields in the Central Provinces which have yet remained unworked, to the lead in the N. W. Himalayas, and to the petroleum mines in Upper Assam and Burmah.

Dr. George Watt, at a meeting of the London Society of Arts held on April 27, 1893, spoke rather freely on 'the hideous mistake made in the past in endeavouring to introduce exotics (specially foreign silk, sugar, cotton, and tea) into India, instead of fostering her indigenous resources of wealth.'

'It is easy to point to the fact,' said Lord Lansdowne at his parting speech at the Calcutta Royal Exchange, 'India has in many departments of its industrial development made very fair progress ; but I confess that when I consider what that progress

has been, when I consider the resources of this country, its fertile soil, its cheap labour, its teeming population, its undeveloped mineral resources, I am not so easily satisfied.' .

We cannot indeed refrain in this place from quoting the following from the Report of the Famine Commission . 'We have elsewhere expressed our opinion that at the root of much of the poverty of the people of India and of the risks to which they are exposed in seasons of scarcity, lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the mass of the population, and that no remedy for present evils can be complete, which does not include the introduction of a diversity of occupations, through which the surplus population may be drawn from

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not be impossible to secure the sympathy of our government, but in the main we cannot count upon its support in all our undertakings.

But it is to ourselves that we must look for the ending or mending of such a miserable state of things. Nations by themselves are made. It is the duty of our public men, and of all those people who have the good of India at heart, to take the initiative in starting independent concerns for the reviving of our lost arts and creating new manufacturing industries. Sporadic attempts have been, and are still being, made in this direction and not entirely without some amount of success. But, to speak the truth, all factories and mills that have been opened in India belong, as a class, except the cotton mills of the Bombay Parsis, to

agricultural products, and led to find the means of subsistence in manufactures or some such support.'

Alas! how unfortunately is India circumstanced. A difficulty of an insurmountable character meets us at the threshold, as the people have not yet come out of their leading-strings and learnt to stand on their own legs, having been used to look up for support and patronage for every scheme and project they may have got in their heads to the one arbiter of their destinies,—the one arbiter which stands in *loco parentis* to them,—the government of their country. This is a disagreeable and lamentable fact, for it is not very likely that our rulers can or rather will, either directly or materially help us to get out of this tutelage. There may be occasions when it may

we regret we have no statistics to lead us to any definite calculation—that it may suffice for all practical purposes in organising some decent industries, and reviving some of the more useful of our historical art handicrafts, may almost be laid down with some amount of confidence. The idea of hoarding or investing it in jewellery must have originated from the fact of there having been no sufficient security to property in days of yore. Now, under British Government, it is difficult to see why we should still stick to the barbarous habit of burying our money under ground or use it for purposes of vain show rather than utilise it for worthier purposes. With the experience of a century of English rule we certainly ought to grow wiser and know better. Or should the influence of



European capitalists, to those who have been lured hither to shake the Indian pogo-da-tree. As we will see elsewhere, the employment of foreign money for the development of our resources is not altogether an unmixed good. It tends not only to unmake us for the race of life, but drains a considerable amount of money which annually increases in geometrical proportion. Yet our eyes are blind to the mischief committed before our own nose. None so blind as those who won't see, and yet we are proud of our patriotism !

There is a vast amount of money—variously estimated from 250 to 300 millions sterling—lying hoarded with our merchants, princes, Maharajahs, Rajahs, and the rest of the landed aristocracy of India. Whatever the actual amount may be—and'

And this—the work of proselytism—ought to be the primary endeavour of our Indian patriots and reformers. How sadly behind the times are our moneyed classes, how unwittingly are we all taxed by our pride, neglect, and folly, and how greatly the whole country lacks the knowledge of the true uses of money! It is indeed a sad comment on our enlightenment that while we hold about 96 crores worth of Government papers and stocks in our hands, only  $27\frac{1}{2}$  crores represent the total paid-up capital which has been invested in joint-stock companies in this country up to date, and of this sum by far the greater portion belongs to foreign countries.

And now is the time most favorable for the development of Indian industries, and if we don't take it by the forelock

civilisation continue to be lost upon us ?

The very facts that foreign capitalists are making so much profit, even with the Rupee down to a shilling, out of the various investments in India, and that often-times mere adventurous and intelligent loafers manage to become rich after only a few years' sojourn in this country, ought to open the eyes of us all to the situation we find ourselves placed in to-day. A little bit of enterprise, some amount of pluck and go, considerable sacrifice and hard labour, with a good deal of mutual confidence (which alas ! is a rare plant in India) and, above all, honesty, are all that may be required to begin with. But the public have to be educated before one can expect these things from them.

fittest, many banks and firms have stopped payments and winded up business, and many more contemplate diverting their capital to other countries. In fact, India is fast becoming a very uninviting place for English capital. And last, though not the least, the conversion of all the 4 per cent loans ought to lead people to think of embarking their surplus funds on trading concerns which, carefully managed, may easily pay an interest at least double than what has been decided upon for the 4 per cent rupee debt.

Though the circumstances are a little favourable, yet the need of protective measures is sadly felt for creating and fostering new manufactures. As Mill has said—to quote again what we have quoted in the previous chapter,—‘individuals cannot be

we shall hardly ever find better opportunities for success. An all-round duty of 5 per cent. *ad valorem* is being levied at the present day on all customs. This is practically a decided, though a reluctant, step towards protection. The Indian producer may turn it into a splendid occasion to undersell foreign goods. Then there is the fall in the exchange value of the rupee. It has dislocated foreign commerce to a very considerable extent, and many capitalists rue the day for having invested their money in Indian trade at all. It is a fact that with the fall in exchange the demand for foreign goods is appreciably lessening, and if it goes still lower, people will find articles of foreign manufacture selling at almost prohibitive rates. In the struggle which has already set in for the survival of the

perhaps it is not known to many that the lower classes of our people, who are the persons likely to suffer most from any rise in the prices of cotton-goods or any other foreign manufacture, to a great extent religiously avoid wearing *Bilatee kapar* (British cottons) or using any articles of foreign make. We have already quoted Sir John Strachey and Sir W. Hunter before to say that besides cotton-goods, nothing else of our foreign imports is in large demand by the people. And of these cotton manufactures, we are in a position to assure our readers, our poorer classes are quite innocent, for Manchester sends out to this country only the *finer goods* which are above the use of our indigent people. *Bilatee kapar* is far less durable and far dearer

expected, to their certain loss to introduce any new manufacture and bear the burden of carrying it on until the producers have been educated up to the level of those with whom the processes are traditional.' Nor do joint-stock companies stand in better stead. But in pleading for protection, it is impossible to lose sight of the fact that the result of it would be to raise the price of all cotton goods and such other necessities of life that are imported from foreign countries. In a poor country like India, it would be urged against us, such a thing would be extremely undesirable. It is idle to admit this to be far and away the strongest argument against following a policy of protection in countries so peculiarly conditioned like India. But

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than those hand-woven loin-cloths, coarse and rough, which are sold by hundreds on market-days in remote villages. To our poorer classes, therefore, any rise in the price of foreign articles, we have every reasons to maintain, would be practically of no concern. If it were otherwise, Government would have found out by this time the inexpediency and danger of having imposed the small duty on foreign goods it has lately done. Nor would the spokesmen and representatives of the people have dared to agitate for the inclusion of cotton-goods in the latest Tariff Act. The fact is, we repeat, articles of extraneous origin find no favour with the Indian ryot, and it is our strong conviction that if the native weaving trade, or for the matter of that, any indigenous handicrafts,

still survive foreign competition, it is simply because they are largely patronised by the rural proletariat. They are quite conscious—it is remarkable their common sense never leaves them—that nowhere in the world can articles of Indian necessity be produced at a cheaper rate than in India itself.

The effects of any protective duty will, therefore, only be felt by the middle and the upper classes. These are exactly the classes to whose indifference and neglect—culpable indifference and neglect—the decadence of native arts and industries may safely be attributed, and who should be made to pay for reviving and encouraging our dying crafts. Nor would this cost be much. Both labour and materials are incomparably cheaper here than

anywhere else in the civilised world, and the hereditary skill of the Indian workman has not yet forsaken him. The only head on which we shall be placed at a decided disadvantage against foreign competition will be in planting machinery—which for sometime to come we shall have to import from Europe—and which shall cost us about treble the sum they do now there. We do not see why, with economical management and careful supervision, India cannot within a reasonable period of time be able to offer articles cheaper, or, at least, as cheap, finer, or as fine, than England or any other foreign country offers to us now. For some years we may be required to pay a dearer price for our articles of daily consumption than we have been hitherto accustomed to pay, but it

must be remembered at the same time that many nations, including ourselves, have paid still higher prices for much less important boons. The British taxpayer knows at what cost he liberated the slaves of America. The Prussian peasant has not yet forgotten the price he had to pay for the creation of private property in land. In the early days of British rule in India, some of our fathers bought the friendship of a Clive or a Warren Hastings at sums which could buy them kingdoms. The annexation of Burmah has cost us almost an incredible amount. If our Government now declares war with any neighbouring kingdom, or if the exchange falls still lower, or if the Indian army and the subsidy of the Amir of Cabul be increased, we shall be made to pay millions of Rupees

to the Imperial Exchequer, but can we not gladly undergo a little hardship for the untold blessings that the revival of our arts and the creation of new manufacturing industries are likely to confer upon us ? As Mill says, 'a protecting duty, continued for a reasonable time, will sometimes be the least inconvenient mode in which the nation can tax itself for the support of such an experiment.'

But neither protection nor creation of new manufactures will help us materially if we cannot secure the assistance of specialists and experts and highly skilled labour. This brings us to one of the most burning questions of our times. To write of arts and industries and not touch upon the subject of technical education would be as ludicrous as to play Hamlet with the part

of the Prince of Denmark left out. Indeed, technical education or training in special industries—that which teaches the best and the easiest way of doing any mechanical work—is the supreme need of India at the present hour. But we must not blink over the fact that there are serious impediments in the way of making such education popular here. In Europe, few people can afford to send in their boys to the Universities, and even many of them who are very well off in life are seldom inclined towards a scholastic education. Here, we consider it sufficiently humiliating to think of giving our boys any special training,—except what is imparted by our law, medical, and engineering colleges. New India, in spite of its liberalism, continues to be a respecter of many old-world prejudices. Secondly, the want of

proper incentives, the general dearth of native enterprises to give employment to highly-skilled native labour, preclude our youngmen from being drawn to these branches of training

Again, the paucity of respectable technical schools or colleges has much to do with the discount at which special training is held in India. There are a few stray schools of no mean pretensions already existing in the country. The Lahore, Bombay and Jaipore Schools of Art, the Saidipet Agricultural College, the Dehra Dun Forest School are all doing excellent work in their respective lines. There are schools and classes on other subjects of lesser repute here and there in the land but none seem to exist particularly and solely devoted to mineralogy, metallurgy,

zoology, botany, horology, higher chemistry, and to giving lessons for handling efficiently the appliances of modern science respecting manufacturing business in all its multifarious departments. Carpentry, turnery, masonry and other domestic arts also require separate schools. As practice should never be divorced from principle, there should always be large museums and workshops attached to every such school. 'The objects of technical schools,' writes Sir Joseph Lee, 'should be to develop the faculties of workmen and at the same time, and in the course of that development, to give them a knowledge of the principles upon which they work, and of the working of machines they use, and to afford means of obtaining practical information on matters connected with their own particular



- trade.\* As skilful labour is economical in the long run, large employers might combine in starting schools for the benefit of their respective trades. Let us hope that with the growth of a healthy public spirit amongst our moneyed people industrialism and technical training may be appreciated and promoted in the country.

And shall our Government do nothing in the meantime to keep our arts and industries going? 'Surely the government,' writes Sir George Birdwood, 'which has spent so much money in introducing South Kensington schools of art into India, might make an annual grant for the purchase of the master-pieces of Indian local manufactures, which they should present to any native prince or gentleman to whom

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\* *Contemporary Review*, May, 1889

they wished to show great honour. A few thousand pounds spent in this way every year would have a most beneficial effect in sustaining many local traditional arts in India now nearly dying out, even of the very recollection of men.' The Government can also help our manufactures with bounties, bounties which even England did not shrink from paying to the Irish linen manufactures in the middle of the last century ?

And cannot the thousand municipalities and District Boards that are lying scattered all over the land do anything to revive these local handicrafts ? If they can grant aids to schools and hospitals, and subsidies to steamer and telegraph services, it is impossible to see why they cannot patronise local manufactures. A world of good can

probably be done by assuring our artisans, that all reasonable efforts shall be made to see their trade prosper, and that they shall be entitled to money-prizes in local exhibitions—which ought to be organised in all centres of active business—commensurate with the amount of skill and labour to be bestowed upon these works

It is not probably widely known that formerly, besides the Mogul Emperors minor Governors local chiefs, and petty princelings, in short all people that had a reputation to maintain, made it a point of honour to support a number of skillful workmen in this way. Even in our own times, the late king of Oudh was a liberal patron of various arts. But a great revolution in the taste of the rulers and the ryot of this country having taken

place in the last half-a-century—a preference for European to home-made articles, irrespective of quality—and a revolution which has been sufficiently condemned by all true friends of India—native works of art find no appreciative market in these days, and every thing *native* is doggedly held at discount, tabooed, or voted barbarous. Amongst other Asiatic countries Japan, is probably the only one which bears a somewhat close resemblance to India on this point. In his yearnings to ape western life, the Japanese has lost much of his own historical skill. A Renaissance of Indian arts is a work of sacred trust, and it would reflect no little discredit upon us if they are left to their own cruel fate, without any determined attempt being made to save them from

undeserved neglect or untimely death. Unless some definite and prompt steps be now taken by the Government, by the people, and by all our public bodies—it is a question in which, happily, all differences of political views might be sunk—to encourage our arts in all legitimate ways, the twentieth century will surely find us devoid of all necessary elements of civilisation and on the brink of national insolvency.

THE CONDITION OF THE INDIAN  
PEASANTRY.

## THE CONDITION OF THE INDIAN PEASANTRY.

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We cannot open this chapter better than by making the following quotations :—

‘Toil, toil, toil ; hunger, hunger, hunger (not actual starvation or it would sooner be all over) ; sickness, suffering, sorrow, these alas ! alas ! are the keynotes of their short and sad existences, and who can deny that for these fifty odd millions and more, it were better that they had never been born, better, almost, that stones were now tied about their necks, and that they were cast into the rivers and drowned.’ (A. O. Hume).

‘I do not hesitate to say that half of our agricultural population never know, from

year's end to year's end, what it is to have their hunger fully satisfied' (Sir Charles Elliott)

The above is not an overdrawn picture of our peasantry. It is seldom that an anti-Congress ruler like Sir Charles Elliott can occupy a common platform with the venerable leader of the Indian National Congress. But these are facts which anybody that runs may read. No amount of administrative sophistry or circumlocutious official reporting can drown the truth that the squalid misery, 'the stifling, never-lifting fog of penury,' depicted above is withering away the vitality of the most sweetly disposed peasantry in the world.

Yes, if ever there was a peasantry which was its 'country's pride,' the place of honour must be yielded to the toiling and



suffering masses of people, who, under the tropical sun of India, grow and produce, even when the blood of man boils and seethes in June, what the whole civilised world takes advantage of, denying themselves even the barest necessities of life. If we want to see martyrs, true, heroic, and self-denying souls, perfectly resigned to their fate, we can find in a single Indian field what we can never expect out of all the pages of Foxe.

In a world which worships the principle of 'the survival of the fittest,' the Indian peasantry had so long their condition overlooked, all their legitimate rights neglected. But to-day full 70 millions of mouths or more, unable to secure even a handful of boiled rice, are praying to Heaven either to mend or end them. The crisis is upon

us, and the final issue cannot be very much longer delayed.

What then should we do with the surging mass of the hunger and sorrow-stricken populace, who, in our prosperity and our suffering, are our brothers and our comrades? Should we allow Nature to make of them mangled victims of hers, or do something that their sufferings may be alleviated and their condition bettered?

It is a statement of bare fact that we do not care to enquire how our brothers of the field live and what they live upon. In Congress platforms, in newspaper columns, on village stumps, we have been constantly reminded of it, and our ears dinned with the recitation of this tale of the ever-increasing poverty of our masses. But have we ever sufficiently paid any heed to it?

In the British Parliament in English electioneering meetings in Tory and Whig club rooms, in scientific and literary societies and in friendly and social gatherings our rulers have frequently been treated with learned and lengthy disquisitions on this question. Tory Democrats, Liberal Unionists, Labor Leaders all sorts and conditions of people have handled this question with more or less ability, and thrashed it out *ad nauseam*. Have our Governors or the powers that be given any attention to these tales of woe or tried to remedy them?

Indeed every body is busy with himself and that which immediately concerns him and seems to have steeled his heart against the general distress outside. 'Thick serene opacity, in the language of Carlyle,

'seem to veil our eyes to Truth and the inner retina of us all have gone paralytic, dead'

It is an unpleasant duty, no doubt, to break the illusion of life by grating the ears, like birds of evil presage, with sad and melancholy songs. Yet, we must reiterate some well known facts and figures on this paramount question even at the risk of being considered a bore. 'Knock, and it shall be opened', is as much true in practical politics as in theology.

What proportion the Indian peasantry bear to the total population of the country is a point very material to realise the extent of misery which our political wiseacres think they can afford to overlook or blink at. In the census of 1891, it has been estimated that over 200 millions of

people, or about 70 per cent of the entire population of India, are supported either by the cultivation of the soil, or by pasturing cattle. The Famine Commissioners held in 1879 that 90 per cent of the rural population of India lived more or less upon the tilling of the soil. All who can speak about India with some amount of authority maintain that India is almost exclusively a country of peasant farmers and the peasantry constitute almost the 'nation'. Probably these statements are enough to convince our readers that England's milchcow is after all not a very enviable or a fat creature either.

Now it shall be our melancholy duty to treat our readers to some very distressing facts. We have already made excerpts at the beginning of this chapter from the

writings of two well-known authorities on the subject ; we will now quote a few more authorities. Mr. Marshman, one of the most eminent Baptist missionaries that ever came out to India, wrote in 1852 : ‘No one has ever attempted to contradict the fact that the condition of the Bengal peasantry is almost as wretched and degraded as it is possible to conceive—living in the most miserable hovels, scarcely fit for a dog-kennel, covered with tattered rags, and unable, in too many instances, to procure more than a single meal a day for himself and family. The Bengal ryot knows nothing of the most ordinary comforts of life.’ And the Bengal ryot, by all official reckoning, is the most prosperous of all Indian peasants John Bright said in 1879 : ‘The people of

- India are poor to an extremity of poverty of which the poorest class in this country, has no conception, and to which it affords no parallel.' Thirty years ago, Lord Lawrence said: 'India is on the whole a very poor country, the mass of the population enjoying only a scanty subsistence.' The late Agricultural Reporter to the Government of Madras, Mr. Robertson, says of the Indian peasant in general: 'In the best seasons, the gross income of himself and his family does not exceed 3d. per day throughout the year, and in a bad season their circumstances are most deplorable.' Less than 8s. for a whole family for a month! An English day labourer or a factory operative would earn more than that in a week, working for a much shorter time. And when we remember that,

however cheap living may be in India, it cannot be managed under the most favourable circumstances at less than Rs 2-8 a month per head, and that an average Indian family consists of 5-4 persons, as revealed in the last census, it is really a puzzle to understand how they can make the two ends meet. But alas! the two ends never meet, for even in the best of times, according to the most reliable of authorities, 40,000,000 people always remain on the actual verge of starvation!

Mr Grierson, a Bengal civilian and no mean authority on Behar life, says that 'all the persons of the labouring classes and 10 per cent of the cultivating and artisan classes, or 45 per cent of the total population of the District of Gya are insufficiently fed, or insufficiently clothed, or both'



And what is true of Gya is unhappily true of most of the Districts in British India. 'The dimensions of Indian trade', said no less a man than the present Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal six years ago, are already enormous, and yet no country is more poor than this. It cannot escape the eye of any intelligent observer that the dirty rags that a large number of our peasants put round their loins, year in and year out, are worn both wet and dry and reveal a very sad picture. For the wearing of a wet cloth after submersions in water and then sunning it upon his person at very serious risks to health is indeed the cause of distress. Again, most people are not aware of the strange fact that our poorer classes take to eating and smoking

opium and a lot of deleterious hemp drugs, not as prophylactics against any specific diseases as has been stated in some quarters, but simply to drown their appetite, that their hunger may not torment them. An English workman, satisfied with his daily 'bread and cheese,' will probably fail to realise the extreme anguish which drives a man to resort to such a suicidal step. To the French, the German, the Italian or the Spanish poor, who feast every day upon 'a dozen of inexpensive and succulent dishes,' such misery would also be almost incredible. Yet the above is a fact and part of a whole truth. In India the cravings of nature are not in a few cases satisfied by nothing more substantial than a few wild flowers or the stew of some insipid herbs and plants. In the Santhal Pergunnahs

whole villages live for weeks together upon the *mahua* (flower of the *Bassia latifolia*), a flower which necessity and hunger have made to agree well with the Santal palate and which can be gathered in large numbers anywhere and everywhere in the district. Nor are the Santals any way singular in this respect. The flower of the wild *sapota* tree, the *caddapah* almond, the fruit of the wild date palm, the fruit of Aarey's tree are as good as staple food with many classes of people in Madras, Central India, Rajputana, and the Punjab respectively. Besides these, in many parts of the country, for the greater part of the year, tender leaves of the jute plant, of brown hemp, and of many rank undergrowths are boiled down as vegetables for want of more nutritive dishes, and relished as luxuries. For,

wherever in India the land yields fruits and vegetables in abundance, people have been found to depend more upon this reserve of Nature than upon the more costly *roti* and *dal*.

During the siege of Paris in 1870, everything worth eating commanded 60 francs. Even a dog or a cat sold for 20 francs, one pound of wolf's flesh or porcupine's for 8 francs, and eggs for 5 francs a-piece. 'Still,' says *An Englishman in Paris*, 'until the very last, there occurred, as far as I know, no case of actual starvation, and I was pretty well posted up in that respect.' Compare this with the heavy death-rate and the wholesale decimation of the lower classes, consequent to the famine of 1877-79, when 6 millions of people are reported to have perished of starvation or

the resulting fever, leaving hecatombs of skeletons behind. This contrast needs no comment. And from the beginning of the current century down to 1880, there have been about three dozens of famines (we do not include in it the innumerable local scarcities which they call *golodovka*, little hunger, in Russia, in contradistinction to *golods* or national famines), in which full 200 millions of souls and more have been 'starved to death' in India ; and whenever a famine breaks out at the present day, and unhappily this has become perennial like the Siberian plague, thousands are still carried over to the majority, and a greater number laid down to bed, or made useless and worthless by scarce and insufficient food. If 'E. B. Lanin' is to be credited, the only country

where a parallel of the havoc wrought by famines in India is to be found is Russia

This is sickening enough. Those of us, however, who have travelled far and wide within the confines of this vast Empire and peeped into native cottages here and there, and know all that their households contain, a few brass or bell metal plates and one or two *lolas* being sometime the most precious treasure in many of them, and how parents and children, a whole family, huddle together like animals all the year round in a little cottage some 15 feet square, will appreciate the truth of the following remarks made by Mr Hume 'At this moment there are fully fifty millions of your countrymen who are moaning hunger-stricken, for the better times that never

come, who with one single dirty rag about their loins shiver even in this warm clime in the chill evenings and raw mornings, who can never fill their own stomachs who, worse still, have to see the one joy and crown of their lives, their little children, unfed, unclothed, to watch them weakened by insufficient nourishment, fall one by one (vainly clinging to their misery-maddened parents for protection), innocent victims to the demons of disease that are ever prowling through our famished population.'

France, before the great Revolution, was not half so badly off. In England, much less misery would have found vent in Manchester Insurrections or Battles of Peterloo. A far better state of things in Ireland than what has been depicted

above elicited from Lord Palmerston the remark that the Irish were on the whole the worst fed, the worst clad, and the worst housed people upon the face of God's earth.

What are the causes of all this intense misery? To what is this hard lot of our peasantry to be attributed? An examination of the popular notions together with expert opinions on this subject will lead us to some definite answers to these queries.

Excess of population is generally believed by most people to be the primary cause of all our social distress. This idea, however, has got such a widespread currency, specially among our uneducated people, that it needs to be enquired into in some detail. That India has been very much thickly populated from a time beyond which



the record of history does not go, no one will presume to deny. All the Greek writers who came with Alexander the Great and lived after him; bear witness to the great populousness of the country. In the Vedas, in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, in all our ancient writings, sacred and profane, we meet with passages which indicate beyond the shadow of a doubt that India has always been densely populated.

Malthus, in his treatise on the *Principle of Population*, tells us that though the Hindu Laws encouraged population, 'strict and absolute chastity,' 'the hard conditions imposed by the legislature in the choice of a wife,' 'the celibacy of an elder brother,' 'the difficulty for the lower classes of people to obtain wives,' 'dreadful

famines,' 'the practice of destroying female infants in certain tribes,' have always acted as very powerful factors in checking it. In spite of all this the population has always been very large.

The existing density of population in some of the more important countries in the world, as detailed in the following table, will give us the comparative position occupied by India in this respect

Countries	Density of pop per sq mile	Countries	Density of pop per sq mile
Belgium	540	Ireland	144.4
England	498	Scotland	137
Holland	360.9	Spain	88
China	289	Norway & Sweden	27
Italy	263.60	Turkish Empire	24
Germany	236.7	United States	17.94
India	229	Russia (European & Asiatic)	12
France	187.8	Canada	14.2

• Herein we find that though India is one of the most populous countries in the world, it has to support a population at the present time not very much disproportionate to its area. As will be seen, from the above, England, China, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands all support a greater number of people in every square mile than India does though India is comparatively much more thickly populated than either France, Ireland or Scotland or Norway and Sweden the Turkish Empire, European and Asiatic Russia and Northern America put together. The extreme thinness of population in Northern America is due to the fact of the New World having been discovered only four centuries ago, while the Turkish Empire and Russia are unfavourable to population for their uncivilised

and unsettled forms of government and the hopeless sterility of their soil. And considering the fertility of India and the high state of civilisation that has prevailed and the mode of government that has almost uniformly obtained in this country since the days of Manu, we need not at all be surprised at the existing density of population, which after all cannot reasonably be pronounced as far above the sustaining power of the land.

In the first general census taken in British India (1868-76), the density of population was found to be only 210 per square mile. In the latest census it has come up to 229. An increase of less than 20 souls for every square mile in the course of 15 years, a period in which India has enjoyed perfect internal peace and

• comparative security of life and property, can hardly be called an unexpected or an enormous increase. And Mr. Baines in the latest decennial Blue Book on *The Moral and Material Progress of India* (1880-90) states as his opinion that an annual increase of 1 per cent., or a total increase of nearly 20 millions, in the population in the next ten years is not also likely to put any very severe strain upon the capabilities of the country.

, Though the general impression of an undue increase in population is somewhat exaggerated, it is not entirely a myth ; for, the population is so unequally distributed, some of the provinces being most thickly peopled, while others are as thin as the thinnest country in Europe, that it is not much to be wondered at that such an

impression had ever got abroad or had such a strong hold upon the popular mind.

The following table has been prepared to exhibit the unequal distribution of population :—

CENSUS 1891

Provinces	Density of pop per sq mile	Provinces	Density of pop per sq mile
Oudh	522	Berars	164
Bengal	474	Bombay	150
N W Provinces	419	Assam	117
Madras	253	Coorg	109
Ajmere	200	Central Provinces	98
Punjab	178	Burmah	48

The above table is at once instructive and edifying. While the tracts bordering on the Ganges are, England and Belgium only excepted, the most populous regions under the sun, the rest of the peninsula cannot be said to have anything above, or

even equal to, the normal density of population elsewhere in the habitable and civilised portions of the old world. Here in India some parts are most fearfully congested and others very sparsely occupied. The density of population varies from 930 to the square mile in Northern Behar to 4 in Upper Burmah. 'The Patna division alone,' as Lord Lansdowne reminded us in his parting speech in Calcutta, 'contains 3 times more population than the great dominion of Canada.' Large parts of Assam, Sindh and Upper Burmah, on the other hand, show an average of only 24 per sq. mile. Nearly 38 millions of people live on a scale of less than 2 per acre. Excluding the four chief cities, the mean density of the population throughout the Empire does not exceed

184. 21 millions are concentrated in the Gangetic Valley alone in the unusual proportion of 877 per sq. mile. The danger and the complication of the situation at once lie in the fact of this unequal distribution of the people. And the popular apprehension from over-population—though a capital seems to have been made out of it—is at the same time to be traced to this source.

A less popular notion attributes all our misery to the high cost of living in British India—resultant, of course, from the increasing exportation of our staple food-grains. It is impossible to deny the truth underlying this belief, for living has really gone up so high that all our rural population have utterly been dismayed by the prospect. Such an unhappy state of things



would have ended in the paralysis of all business in Europe, but Indians know how to suffer in silence, for the experience of centuries has taught them that there is nothing like patience and forbearance. 'Not 30 years ago,' said a venerable old man hailing from Umballa in the Nagpore Congress, 'not 30 years ago, wheat sold at one and a half, and grain at two maunds for the Rupee, for our grain was not exported to foreign lands. Now it is six times as dear, and six times as hard for the poor to fill their bellies, because our philanthropists have conjured up the phantasm of free trade to drain our granaries. o o o No doubt it is all in accordance with high economic science, but, my friends, remember this,—this too, is starving your brethern.

Half a century ago, rice—the staple food-grain of about a third of the Indian people—used to sell at less than a rupee while to day its price is seldom less than four times as much. What a change ! But as we have touched on this question in the chapter on Free Trade, it is undesirable to dilate upon it any further and go over trodden ground again.

Though, on the one hand, living has become very much dear, no proportionate increase, be it noted here, has been made on the other hand in either the wages of our labourers or in the profits of our agricultural peasants ‘The unfortunate labourer,’ writes Sir Samuel Baker, a man of decided anti-Indian feelings, ‘is a direct sufferer, as his food has somewhat increased in price, while his wages remain at the

standard of former years.\* It has been calculated that the mean average earnings of our agricultural labourers do not exceed Rs. 5 or about 5s. a month. According to Sir Henry Cunningham's estimate, 'the labourer gets a wage from 2d. a day or, in other cases, 3s. or 4s. a month.' Wrote an anonymous writer (evidently an Englishman) in the defunct *Oudh Gazette* in 1877 : 'It is only in India that patience, dexterity of manipulation, grace in designing, trustworthiness in handling gold and precious stones, and the skill which is the result of many years of application, can be bought for 3d. a day.' It would thus appear that this corresponds to the wages, as Mr. Thorold

Rogers has carefully shown, which an English agricultural labourer used to get in the 14th century. The rate of wages that prevailed in India 300 years ago, mention of which has been made by Abul Fuzl in the *Ayecn Akbari*, has remained almost stationary to this day. Indeed, even in spite of the magic wand of free trade, a nation of bondmen cannot expect a 'fair-day's wages for a fair-day's work.' Here is an important anomaly which would go a great way in explaining much of our existing misery, and as misfortune would have it, we have seldom opened our eyes to this grave side of the question.

Again, in spite of permanent and ryotwari settlements, survey tenure and village communities, our peasantry is continually

being ground down under the cruel exactions of the intermediary revenue collectors whom our government has created and fostered. It is true, as a distinguished English prelate recently wrote 'in one of the *'Reviews'*, that not even a paternal government nor a system of land nationalisation has been able to prevent the growth of landlordism in India. It is an open secret, and a secret not altogether unknown to the highest authorities in the land, that our landlords thrive very much at the expense of the poor ryots and in proportion as our landlords are growing the poor peasants are sinking.

There is again a respectable minority who hold that the miserable condition of our peasantry is all due to taxation—to the 'exorbitant' rate of taxation in vogue

all over British India. As we shall speak, out rather fully on this subject in the succeeding chapter, we refrain from making any observations here on this point.

Another set of men, equally reasonable and equally well posted in economic statistics, hold this to be owing to 'a short sighted system of Land Revenue administration, whereby, excepting Bengal and some other parts of the country, where the Permanent Settlement has obtained since the days of Lord Cornwallis assessments are renewed every 12 or 13 years. At every fresh Settlement an abrupt and extortionate enhancement of rent is laid upon the peasantry with the result that it takes off a very large slice out of their very limited purse, disturbs their quiet

contentment, cripples the staple industry and makes improvements in the land almost impossible, for sometime. If there were any doubts left as to the mischief of enhancing the rent at a rate quite out of proportion to the capacity of the soil, the history of the late Assam valley and Kolaba riots would dispel them. Sir Auckland Colvin describes, in a memorandum dated 1872, the effects of constant revisions of settlement in a language which, if it had come from any native pen, would have been characterised as almost seditious. Sir Charles Aitchison, a former Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab and the brilliant writer of the little monograph on Lawrence in Hunter's 'Rulers of India' series, strongly denounces high assessment as a 'dangerous policy,' and the mischiefs

and the oppressive fiscal laws it rendered necessary.'

This iniquitous land policy of the present Government stands, however, sharply in contrast with what prevailed under Native, or even under Mahometan, rule. It is a glaring fact of Indian history that fixity of tenure has been enjoyed by the peasants since the establishment of good government in the country. During the reign of Akbar this was supplanted by decennial settlements, but settlement in those days hardly meant anything more than survey, and calculations as regards the produce of the fields under cultivation. The land revenue was fixed at one-third of the gross produce, and even when settlements had a look to increased assessments, there were very many extenuating circumstances, says Malleon,



in his life of Akbar, to mitigate the hardships of the system. As in every other human institution, abuse, however, slowly crept into it, until extortions and rack-renting reached their climax during the administration of the latter-day Mugal

of the *Land Revenue of Bombay*, the following startling facts and figures were brought to light. 'It is quite evident that the land revenue as now assessed can, to a great extent, not be realised, and that considerable hardship is inflicted on the people in endeavouring to collect it. Again, of the 87,114 acres of land whose occupancy right had to be sold in the three years between 1887-88 to 1889-90 in default of payment of current revenue, 39,849 acres had to be bought in by government at a nominal price for want of bidders, and 47,265 acres were sold to others ; that is to say, in round numbers, half the land at its present assessment was not found to be worth cultivating, for the agricultural population is dense enough to utilise it all if it were

fairly assessed.' Taking a period of 11 years, Mr. Rogers calculated that the property, personal and real, of 840,713 defaulters was sold by auction, the former fetching 2,959,906 Rupees only. 'The occupancy right was sold in 1,963,364 acres, of which the large proportion of 1,174,358 acres had to be bought in by government at nominal prices. These

one-eighth of the whole agricultural population of the Madras Presidency have been sold out of house and home within the course of only 11 years, and for the simple offence of their having been unable to meet the high land revenue demands of the government. Indeed, it is hardly credible that owing to these high assessments about 16 per cent. of the so-called occupied land in the Madras Presidency remains waste, for it cannot be paid for.

Bombay has not fared better. The Deccan Ryots Commission (1878) reproduced the following passage from one of the early Settlement Reports : 'The over-estimate of the capabilities of the Deccan, acted upon by our early collectors, drained the country of its agricultural capital, and

account for the poverty and distress in which the cultivating population has ever since been plunged.' In a minute, of the Government of Bombay, on the report of the Collector of Solapore for 1872-73, Mr Dacosta, informs us, it is stated . 'The Government has read, with much concern, the opinion expressed by the Collector as to the undue pressure of the revised rates, in consequence of which a large quantity of land has been put up for sale in default of revenue, much of which found no purchasers ' If Bombay authorities are to be believed in, about half of the arable land there is not yet thought worthy of cultivation The N -W. P., the Punjab, and the Central Provinces all smart under equally unreasonable assessment It would be foolish to question in the face of this

consensus of opinion the fact that agricultural distress has everywhere followed a high rate of assessments.

The extreme smallness of the holdings is also regarded in some quarters as one of the many causes of agricultural distress 'Millions cling with a despairing grip writes Sir W. W. Hunter, 'to their half acre of earth a-piece under burden of rack-rent and usury.' This state is a necessary corollary to the disproportionately large number of people that are obliged to follow agriculture for their livelihood

One of the chief causes of the pitiable situation of the Indian agriculturists, says Dr Voelcker, is his want of enterprise. Just as soon as he gets beyond starvation point, he sits down at home and begins to take the world easy. We are told that

that to which John Bright attributed the poverty of Ireland applies as well in India 'Ireland is idle, therefore she starves' There may be a bit of truth in this, for poverty, insufficiency of food, and the oppression of a tropical sun not only incapacitate a man for any enterprise but also seriously interfere with his power of work A half fed ryot cannot be expected to rival the energies of an English peasant or a Scotch crofter, and, as for enterprise, it requires considerable outlay of capital, which he has not got to spare And what about those millions of people who always hover between life and death, who never get beyond the starvation point, and to whose cottage no sunshine ever comes ? To call them idle is to bring in question the evidence of sociology and

anthropology, and to assert boldly that preservation of the species is a forgotten instinct with the Indian people.

Extravagant waste in weddings or *sradh* ceremonies is not an insignificant factor in the condition of the Indian ryot. Traditions of centuries are not things to be easily eradicated, and he must be a bold man indeed who would venture to override them. Religious beliefs have strangely commingled with social usages in this country, and have been crystallised together into superstitions by the process of ages. And in all Hindu India no greater motive power to action ever exists than these. Generally abstemious and obliged by circumstances to lead a most simple life, the Indian peasant is bound by his social surroundings to open his purse-strings



whenever any appeal to either tradition or superstition is made. He cannot resist the temptation of being liberal, however hard up he may be otherwise, on the occasion of offering sacrificial cakes to the manes of his departed fathers or when giving his daughters away in marriage. Any of these ceremonies is sure either to exhaust all his little capital, if he ever had it, or to land him in debts from which it becomes well-nigh impossible for him to extricate himself. The frequency of these ceremonies has made the Indian ryot almost a stranger to thrift and providence.

Indiscriminate charity and the joint-family system are also held by some as fruitful sources of much social misery. All over the land, a vast number of

people are supported by munificent religious endowments and voluntary charity, and a still vaster number depend upon brother-help for their sustenance. In a country where charity has considerably usurped the place of religion, and where population is so numerous as to leave no sufficient room for self-help, these are necessary conditions of existence which cannot possibly be eliminated. Yet it is idle to deny that they generate much idleness amongst the humble recipients of these favours, and swell the number of beggars to a hopeless extent. Anybody who has seen our holy cities and places of pilgrimage, or a Hindu fair like the one recently held at Allahabad or Hurdwar, knows the large army of beggars that infest them and take an amount of pride in

then ignoble profession. The redundancy of the agricultural market to which passing attention has been drawn more than once again compels many people to stalk idly about during the hours of labour all over India.

We are also told that modern Indian peasants have generally learnt to live above their means and that a little learning and ambition have killed a good number of them for their ancestral occupations. Surely faults like these can be found here and there out of the heterogeneous masses of the Indian people, and unhappily the importations of many cheap foreign goods are throwing before them temptations of no ordinary kind, yet no grosser libel upon the whole class well known for its unwearied assiduity can ever be conceived or

entertained and such opinions need only to be contemptuously dismissed.

The cursed habit of drink, it is maintained by many intelligent people, is nearly at the root of the existing state of social distress. Just as the publicans followed in the wake of Rome's victorious armies, so in India too this habit has quickly followed every fresh success of the British bayonet. It is a commonplace observation that drink is at eternal feuds with thrift and providence.

Again, not a small part of the sufferings of the people owes its origin to the system prevailing in our Courts of Justice. The Stamps Act is inexorable, and 'the man of the law' is abroad. Justice is dispensed at a very high price while the elements of finality are, as a rule, invariably wanting. Litigation,

litigation, litigation—all round litigation! The muktear and his touter are everywhere over the land, and the meshes of British law are too fine for anybody to escape. Besides, litigation imports a zest and an emulation which one cannot expect even in legalised gambling. The fascination of law has permeated even the lowest strata of society, and like the Irish cottier, the Indian peasant delights in ‘entering his neighbour in the law’, and then nothing is big enough for the capacious pockets of our lawyers. Undoubtedly this outlandish spirit of rushing to the courts of justice is a canker to society which most imperatively requires to be removed.

It is also held in some respectable quarters that ‘a country which exports both crops and manure must be declining

in fertility', and India being one of such countries, as Dr. Voelcker admits it to be, is gradually becoming poorer. We are further told by the consulting chemist to the Royal Agricultural Society of England that cattle manure is very badly managed here and that the land is made to go on producing the same crops from year's end to year's end with the result that the potential fertility of the soil is being reduced, and the agricultural prospects getting gloomier in consequence. It will be mere presumption on our part to deny these conclusions of the learned doctor, arrived at after much patient and laborious research and we do not therefore hesitate to say that not a little of the wretched condition that has overtaken our peasant classes is due to causes such as these. Dr.

Voelcker might not unreasonably add that the increase of the beef eating population in India was tapping at the very source of cheap production

Floods droughts and blights are also reckoned as no mean foes of the Indian agricultural population. Indeed not a year passes in which considerable damage is not done to the standing crops. Sometime wholesale destruction of crops is also reported

These then are the various causes which are supposed to have conspired to make the life of the Indian peasants worse than that of the starvelings of East End London. But above these all stands that unanswerable fact that the Indian peasantry have never been very much well off at any time of our history and that their

present condition has been their common heritage for all time 'This poverty,' Justice Ranade truly remarks, 'is an old, a very old inheritance'. However rose coloured descriptions we may give of our early prosperity in the golden days that never were, and however much we may try to whitewash our traditional faults and foibles our peasant population has been a rack rented and unhappy class of people in all the various stages and epochs of Indian history,—ever 'the sport of fortune, and the plaything of avarice'

The causes of this poverty are deep down in the history of the country. A variety of physical, economic, and political causes have been moulding the destiny of our people since the beginning of history and have made it now anything but



enviable. Montesquieu's famous dictum that the physical conditions of a country are always the chief determining agents in shaping the character of its people, can be proved from the case of India alone. The sluggish lethargy of its people, due to the enervation of tissue and muscle in the climate of India, the government of class by class, unequal or mal-distribution of wealth, the system of peasant tenantry, and every influence that religion and politics could exert, have contributed their quota to the making of the condition of the Indian agricultural labourer as miserable as could be expected from the circumstances of the case. The immediate requirements of life are neither many nor difficult to procure under the warmth of a tropical sun, and the fewness of human necessi-

ties here has not been an impotent factor in the formation of our national character.

'Hereditary bondsmen.' says a *Westminster Reviewer* referring to our masses, 'their situation has oscillated between the oppression of irresponsible despotism and the devastation of bandits and disbanded armies' A *Quarterly Reviewer* wrote in the same strain in April 1879. 'Constant war and revolution, raids of Pindaris and other marauders, the systematic oppression of his own Government, and the corruption of its officials, encouraged the rack-rented ryot to live from hand to mouth.'

Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, opens a new phase of the question and lays down that 'there is no instance on record of any tropical country in which

the heat of the climate has not caused an abundance of food, and the abundance of food caused an unequal distribution, first of wealth, and then of political and social power.' Buckle was neither an empiric nor did he delight in overbold and hasty generalisations, or reckless assertions based on mere vague and insufficient data, though Sir Henry Sumner Maine tried his best to throw discredit both on the materials he worked upon as well as the inferences he drew from them. Buckle gives us his facts and the materials on which he builds his theories. On the authority of Manu, our ancient law-giver, he says that in India the very name of a labourer was 'expressive of contempt,' and that 'a law was actually made forbidding any labourer to accumulate wealth.' As

for the unequal distribution of wealth, Buckle says 'we must expect to find it in countries where the labour-market is always redundant,' and from an examination of 'earliest Indian records which have been preserved—records between two and three thousand years old—we find evidence of a state of things similar to that which now exists, and which, we may rely upon it, always has existed ever since the accumulation of wealth once fairly began. We find the upper classes enormously rich, and the lower classes miserably poor. We find those by whose labour the wealth is created, receiving the smallest possible share of it, the remainder being absorbed by the higher ranks in the form either of rent or of profit.'

As for the actual wages of the agricul-

tural labourer, these were the residue of what little was left to him after rent, profits and interest had been paid. Usury, according to Mr R C Dutt, has prevailed in India from the early Rig Veda times. Vasistha, Yajnavalkya and Manu all speak of the lowest legal interest for money as 15 per cent to the Sudras the highest rate fixed was 60 per cent for unsecured loans. And now as to rent. In England and Scotland says Mr Buckle, 'the rent paid by the cultivator for the use of land is estimated in round numbers taking one farm with another, at a fourth of the gross produce. In France the average proportion is about a third, while in the United States of North America it is well known to be much less and indeed in some parts to be merely nominal. But in India the

legal rent, that is, the lowest rate recognised by the law and usage of the country is one-half of the produce.' Buckle evidently was very wrong here, for one-sixth of the produce was the standard rent in Ancient India. It is much to be regretted that he did not read any other Hindu authority than Manu. The conclusion he draws from these facts is, however, true,—that the reward of the labourers was very small in proportion to the reward received by the upper classes.<sup>1</sup>

‘When inequality of wealth once commences,’ says John Stuart Mill, ‘in a community not constantly engaged in repairing by industry the injuries of fortune, its advances are gigantic, the great masses of wealth swallow up the smaller. The Roman Empire ultimately became covered with

the very landed possessions of a comparatively few families, for whose luxury, and still more for whose ostentation, the most costly products were raised, while the cultivators of the soil were slaves, or small tenants in a nearly servile condition.' This was exactly what also happened in ancient and mediæval India, and as long as the distribution of wealth goes on unequally, this shall continue to be the baneful and curse of this unhappy land.

Malthus has also some very pertinent remarks to make upon this engrossing topic. He says that the tendency to early marriages prompted every person to enter into this state, who could look forward to the slightest chance of being able to maintain a family. The natural consequence of this was that 'the lower classes of people

were reduced to extreme poverty, and were compelled to adopt the most frugal and scanty mode of subsistence.' He further adds that 'every failure in the crops from unfavourable seasons was felt most severely.' Though Megasthenes affirms that famine has never visited India and that 'there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food,' there occurred a famine in Magadha in the reign of Chandragupta when many respectable people were compelled to shift their abode. About 450 A. D. another severe famine broke out in Cashmere, during the reign of Funjua. But these were few and far between, one in a century at most. Malthus quotes from Sir William Jones' translation of the *Institutes of Hindu Law* some instances in which a few



Brahmans appear to have done 'impure and unlawful acts' to seek a remedy against famishing in times of distress. One instance we give here. 'Viswamitra too, than whom none knew better the distinctions between virtue and vice, resolved, when he was perishing with hunger, to eat the haunch of a dog, which he had received from a *Chandála*' On this Malthus very truly remarks 'If these great and virtuous men of the highest class, whom all persons were under the obligation of assisting, could be reduced to such extremities, we may easily conjecture what must have been the sufferings of the lowest class'

If this was the condition of the Indian peasantry under the Native Rule, how much worse was it under the Mahometan

Government it is difficult to conceive. Bernier, who remained in India for some years during the reign of Shah Jehan, thus gives us a picture of the times in his valuable *Travels in the Mughal Empire*. We have seen how in the *Indies* the gold and silver disappear in consequence of the tyranny of Timariots (Jagirdars), Governors, and Revenue contractors—a tyranny which even the monarch, if so disposed, has no means of controlling in provinces not contiguous to his capital—a tyranny often so excessive as to deprive the peasant and the artisan of the necessities of life, and then to die of misery and exhaustion—a tyranny owing to which those wretched people either have no children at all, or have them only to endure the agonies of starvation, and to die at a tender age—a

tyranny, in fine, that drives the cultivator of the soil from his wretched home to some neighbouring state, in hopes of finding milder treatment, or to the army, where he becomes the servant of some trooper. As the ground is seldom tilled otherwise than by compulsion, and as no person is found willing and able to repair the ditches and canals for the conveyance of water, it happens that the whole country is badly cultivated, and a great part rendered unproductive from the want of irrigation.\* 'To draw from the soil all the money we can, though the peasant should starve or abscond,' is, Bernier tells us, the guiding principle with the contemporaneous Revenue contractors.

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\* *Bernier's Travels* (Constable's Oriental Miscellany, vol. I) pp. 226-27.

, In the reign of Humayoon, about 1556 A. D., a terrible famine broke out in the Eastern provinces. Budauni, a great historian, says, that 'men ate their own kind, and the appearance of the famished sufferers was so hideous that one could scarcely look upon them.' Abul Fazl says referring to this famine, 'men were driven to the extremity of eating each other and some formed themselves into parties to carry off lone individuals for their food.'

Two centuries later, on the eve of the British conquest, another famine occurred and lasted for two years (1737-1738). A Jesuit writer says that 'it is impossible for him to describe the misery to which he was witness during the famine', and the description which he gives of it and of the mortality which it occasioned, is suffi-

ently dreadful without further detail. Another Jesuit, speaking more generally, says, 'every year we baptise a thousand children, whom their parents can no longer feed, or who, being likely to die, are sold to us by their mothers, in order to get rid of them.'

Speaking of the time of Warren Hastings and the exaggerated notion about Indian wealth that filled the imagination of even astute men of business in those days, Macaulay pertinently remarks 'Nobody seemed to be aware of what nevertheless was most undoubtedly the truth, that India was a poorer country than countries which in Europe are reckoned poor, than Ireland, for example, or than Portugal' The notorious Debì Singh who was Hastings' agent for oppressing the people of

Northern Bengal was quoted by Edmund Burke in the last century to say that the effects of the husbandmen of Rungpore were 'only a little earthenware, and their houses only a handful of straw.' Colonel Broughton, writing in 1809 from the Camp of the Sindhia, thus describes the condition of the Mahratta people : 'when grain is dear, hundreds of poor families are driven to the most distressing shifts to obtain a bare subsistence. At such times I have often seen women and children employed in picking out the undigested grains of corn from the dung of the different animals about the camp. . . . I was returning from a ride the other morning, when two miserable looking women followed me for charity : each had a little infant in her arms ; and one of them repeatedly offered

to sell hers for the trifling sum of two rupees.'

The above prove beyond doubt that the condition of the peasantry under Mahometan rule and even in the beginning of this century was distressing enough. It only remains for us now to add that under British administration the misery has only deepened, the pinch of poverty has become the most galling, the whole peasantry have sunk into the most degraded condition of coolies, and the country brought to the verge of ruin. The sunshine and the ray of hope and prosperity that according to Arrian, Megasthenes, Nicolode Conti, Barbosa, Ibn Batuta and Elphinstone now and then smiled upon native cottages under Hindu and Mahometan rule have now entirely disappeared.

In the language of John Bright, 'the people of India are in a state of poverty, and of decay, unexampled in the annals of the country under their native rulers.' Years ago, the late Mr. Robert Knight after opening the columns of his paper, the *London Statesman*, for the discussion of this subject arrived at this deliberate conclusion 'What the Government and the people of England have to wake up to, is the fact that instead of British rule having enriched the people of India, it has reduced the masses of them to a poverty so abject as to be nearly incredible.' The reasons for all this have already been specified before to the best of our understanding.

Now how long shall we flounder in this slough of Despond? Shall there be no



end of this protracted night of our misery?

Various persons, however, have suggested various reforms. There have been no end of Morrison's Pills and panaceas prescribed as remedies. And as the social canker grows apace, drastic measures have also been invented and proposed. Man's fertile brain has been fully laid under contribution, and intellectual speculation of all kinds has not been slow to add its quota to the general confusion of ideas. Some of these are of such a puerile and foolish nature that they will not bear examination. Others are so difficult of execution and would involve such complications and uncertainties that they may safely be let alone. Only, only a few of these seem to be somewhat feasible and are therefore

tion of a colony somewhere within the Empire for the willing and surplus population of the more crowded provinces and, effectual checks should be placed upon the unreasonable multiplication of the peasant classes

5 A sound knowledge of agriculture should be spread broadcast over the country, and more works of irrigation, drainage, and embankments should be taken up in hand by the Government

6 The revivification of the *panchayat*, and the introduction of a Poor Law in India

7 The re-adjustment and reduction of taxation, direct and indirect

An effective system of national education is sometimes pronounced to be one of the greatest remedies to wholesale poverty.

curring by them either for buying seed, grain, or meeting contingencies, or for any unforeseen exigencies, is sometimes ruinous. Once a debt incurred,—and our people are always liable to run into debts—it is not at all easy to get out of it, for the poor ryot is required to pay a high rate of interest, in most cases beyond his means, and not on rare occasions this interest is also reproductive. Loan with compound interest is an every-day affair all over India. This oftentimes means the ruin or the insolvency of entire families. In the Presidency of Bombay, where the evil reaches its high-water mark, and where we may find a 'whole population of paupers, hopelessly meshed in the webs of userers,' nothing is more sadly and urgently required by the peasantry than protec-

tion against money-lenders; for, the various Deccan Agricultural Relief Acts, and the Insolvency Act notwithstanding, the exactions of the money-lenders continue to be most severe and cruel. It is a heart-rending sight to see our peasantry unable to stave off their creditors for any length of time, closely pursued with criminal intimidation and by bailiff's people, plunge at last into worse debts or rot in the civil jails. The Land Improvements Act and the Agricultural Loans Act, though very well-meaning measures in themselves, are to all intents and purposes mere dead letters, and have failed to offer any substantial relief to those classes which suffer most from want of capital. Takavi advances are grudgingly given, and those never in the right time. If money must be had to feed

the cattle and keep the wolf away from the door, the peasant has no other alternative than to go to the 'gombteen man' and submit to all his exacting terms. Debt is the very pith and marrow of the extreme wretchedness of the peasant population of India.

To relieve our poorer people from the necessity of going to Shylock's counter, efforts have been made from time to time to establish agricultural banks in India. These banks are required to meet the pecuniary demands of our agricultural population with very accommodating rates of interest. Anybody conversant with the contemporary history of continental Europe, more specially with that of Germany and Italy, need not be reminded how the people's banks have considerably changed the material con-

dition of the peasantry in those countries in quite recent times. Sir Raymond West, a name universally respected in India, recently expressed a hope that similar banks would be the means of India's 'social reformation.' A correspondent, writing to 'India' in April 1892, predicted that 'agricultural banks, properly managed, would be the salvation of India.' Sir William Wedderburn tried his best, while in India, to bring the subject within the sphere of practical politics and has deserved well of the country. But the then Secretary of State for India not countenancing this 'innovation,' the whole matter fell through and collapsed. Since then, efforts though rather of a half-hearted and spasmodic nature, have now and then been renewed, but to no purpose.

Sir Edward Buck admits that the 'idea of Government being the money-lender to the agricultural classes is an indigenous one. The money-lender has taken the place of Government.' But why then does the Government submit to this oppressive usurpation and does not wrest from the hands of these userers one of its most sacred duties, it is impossible to see. Our Government has not, we regret to point out, moved an inch in the matter and seems to turn a deaf ear to all wise counsels. Nor, not until the Government comes forward would it be entirely safe to 'deprive the soil of productive power by stopping the trade of the money-lender.' Heavy pressure must indeed be brought to bear upon it that it may look upon this question in a favour-

able light. When we remember that the entire capital for these banks will, in all human probability, most willingly be subscribed to by the existing money-lending classes themselves, and that our Government will have nothing more to do than to extend to them its guarantee, its position of masterly inactivity appears indeed as an inexplicable riddle.

As regards the fourth, it is admitted on all hands that internal emigration is yet far from reaching its normal state. Sir Charles Elliott has told us that the province of Assam is itself capable of providing food to a large contingent of people who complain of scant living to-day. A colony of indigent Bengalis and Benaris founded in Assam would go a great way in solving provincial poverty. Cen-



tral Provinces and Burmah are also very attractive places and ought to draw people from the N.-W. Provinces and contiguous districts. The excellent work that is being done in the Tennyson Colony founded by Mr. Arnold White, and in Mauricio in the province of Buenos Ayres established by Baron Hirsch, ought to be always before our mind. No scheme of solitary emigration will take with our countrymen. For, like a community of bees, to use the figurative expression of Mr. White, we would prefer the idea of swarming together to a new hive instead of migrating like single or married swallows. General Booth once held out large hopes of founding a big industrial colony for the people of the over-crowded parts of India. We believe the failure of similar

schemes of the Salvation Army elsewhere has induced the General to abandon the idea for the present. But is there nobody else to try it? At one time in the history of the world, the Indo-Aryans have been the most forward of all peoples in colonising, now India lags even behind Italy in the matter of emigration. The history of the English settlers in Cape Colony and Australia, of the Germans in South Africa, and of the Scandinavians in Minnesota ought to inspire us all with hope and confidence. But the hand is wanting to undertake such a gigantic task of national well-being.

And as for the last suggestion contained in the fourth proposal, it is due to us to say that by effectual checks to population we do not want to bring in the

aid of the Legislature to our purpose, but leave them to be evolved out of the higher agencies of education and general enlightenment. None but the wearer knows where the shoe pinches; and our peasantry are beginning to feel that a numerous progeny—often the result of child-marriage and social imprudence—are fruitful sources of much misery and unhappiness. In the absence of many automatic checks on over-population, such as war and pestilence, the population has gone on multiplying without a thought of its destiny. It is a crime to marry and beget children and then stoically let them die of starvation. 'Poverty' says John S. Mill, 'like most social evils, exists because men follow their brute instincts without due consideration.' Our

peasantry, or for the matter of that, those of us who cannot afford the luxury of marrying, ought to be schooled in the wholesome doctrines of Malthus and taught to gather sufficient courage to withstand that ubiquitous being—the Indian match-maker. We do not like to go in for wholesale restriction of marriage or any restrictions equivalent to those existing in some of the German States, but we wish them alone to marry who understand and appreciate the grave responsibilities of married life, and are in a position to maintain a family. Only, our contention is, let marriages be contracted sparingly.

Now, as for the fifth, that there is much room for improvement in our agricultural conditions no thinking man will care to deny. Our cattle urine and animal bones

are never utilised for the purposes of manure—though the former has been found, on analysis, to be in no way inferior to that of English cattle, and though 8 lakhs worth of bones are annually shipped away from India for the benefit of foreign fields. The *Cassia tona* and the *Argemone mexicana*, which Mr T N Mukharji informs us, contain a large amount of potent manurial wealth, are allowed to 'rot and moulder without so much as a thought being given to utilise them, the refuse of large cities—a considerable source of manure—is also—allowed to pollute the water of rivers and to fill the air with its poisonous exhalation.' Then our manure is always exposed to the fierce sun and the heavy rain, besides being burnt in large quantities in lieu of fuel. These are facts overwhelm

ing enough to convince every body of the great need of reform in this line. The Agricultural Department is busy with Land Record files, and does not like to stir itself with the more serious question of our future supply. 'This question Dr Voelcker says, is indissolubly bound up with the well-being and even the bare existence of the people of India.' Mr Hume when he was a secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Agriculture, declared, that 'with proper manuring and proper tillage, every acre, broadly speaking, of the land in the country can be made to yield 30 50 or 70 per cent. more of every kind of crop than it at present produces and with a fully corresponding increase in the profits of cultivation. Yet nobody

seems to give a thought to this most important subject.

Considerable ignorance also prevails as to the proper breeding and keeping of cattle. An insufficiency of grazing grounds, a sad want of any veterinary knowledge, a general dearth of fodder crops, together with the uncertainty of rainfall and scarcity of water, are sufficient impediments to better husbandry. Again, the theory of the rotation of crops may not be quite unknown amongst our agricultural labourers, still foreign demands necessitate the growing of the same crops in the same soil from year to year. Sir James Caird said in the Famine Commission Report, 'crop follows crop without intermission, so that Indian agriculture is becoming simply a process of exhaustion.' Then again seeds are not

always very carefully selected, nor is the use of drills widely resorted to in India. M. Grandeau, unquestionably the best living agricultural authority in France, has pointed out what a vast amount of loss is caused by sowing by hand instead of using a drill. The destruction of crops by insects imposes also a heavy loss upon the agriculturists. 'Now,' says Sir Edward Buck, 'it is believed that at least one per cent of the annual crop of wheat is destroyed by weevils. The conclusion is that 2 millions of maunds of wheat worth, say, 5 millions of Rupees, are devoted every year to the food of a not very interesting little insect.' There are many other agricultural pests doing harm to innumerable grains. All these go a long way in explaining why the yields of our crops are so



extremely low and inferior to those of other countries. 11 bushels of grain, it has been calculated, are produced per acre in India as compared with 30 in England and 40 in Scotland.

We are told on the authority of Sir James Caird again that if one bushel an acre could be added to the produce of the Indian fields, it would feed 22 millions of people more. Sir W.W. Hunter shows that to meet the increase of population all that is required is to add one and a half bushel per cent. a year to the present rate of produce. In the face of such statements and facts, is it not our paramount duty to enlighten our agricultural labourers on these vital points, and to do all in our power to popularise the fundamental principles of the science of agri-

culture amongst all sections of our people ? The Celestial Empire and the Land of the Rising Sun, besides the Western countries, might yield very valuable suggestions in connection with this subject.

Our agricultural population is a very intelligent class and they will be found very good materials to be worked upon. Mr. H. H. Risley writes : 'within the range of subjects of which he (the Indian villager) has personal knowledge, he is considerably more intelligent, than the English agricultural labourer.' 'Although,' says Sir John Strachey, 'uneducated and superstitious to a degree unknown in the most ignorant countries of Europe, the agricultural classes are certainly not

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\* C. A. WILKINSON, *ibid.*, May, 1901, 'Race basis of the Indian social movement.'

inferior in intelligence to the peasants of our own country'. Colonel Sleeman counted among the Indian peasantry some of the best men he ever knew. Anything that is likely to improve agriculture is sure to add considerably to the national wealth, and no opportunity should ever be missed of educating the peasant classes in the mysteries of their own profession and making the best of their native intelligence.

Sir Henry S. Maine has clearly proved what a great power for good was the *panchayet* in ancient India. All the advantages of a duly-constituted court was to be obtained there from without the ruinous expensiveness of our modern processes of securing justice. If costly litigation is to be avoided there is only one way out of it, and that by reviving the *panchayet* and

giving to it quasi-judicial powers, both civil and criminal, similar to what have been conferred upon the Prussian communal councils recently.

Regarding Poor Laws we cannot do better than quote the following remarks of John Stuart Mill : 'I conceive it to be highly desirable that the certainty of subsistence should be held out by law to the destitute able-bodied, rather than their relief should depend on voluntary charity. In the first place, charity almost always does too much or too little ; it lavishes its bounty in one place, and leaves people to starve in another. Secondly, since the State must necessarily provide subsistence for the criminal poor while undergoing punishment, not to do the same for the poor who have not offended is to give a premium on

crime. And lastly, if the poor are left to individual charity, a vast amount of mendicity is inevitable. What the State may and should abandon to private charity, is the task of distinguishing between one case of real necessity and another. Private charity can give more to the more deserving. The State must act by general rules. It cannot undertake to discriminate between the deserving and the undeserving indigent. It owes no more than subsistence to the first, and can give no less to the last. . . . There is probably no country in which, by varying the means suitably to the character of the people, a legal provision for the destitute might not be made compatible with the observance of the conditions necessary to its being innocuous.'

SOME IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF POVERTY.

## SOME IMMEDIATE CAUSES OF POVERTY.

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‘Great nations are never impoverished by private, though they sometimes are by public, prodigality and misconduct’, says Adam Smith. The impoverishment of India by ‘public prodigality and misconduct’ is the charge we are now about to lay to the account of our Anglo-Indian administration. Many unhappy factors as have been noticed in the previous pages, have conspired to make the condition of the Indian people one of extreme distress but over and above them all stand the immediate causes of our poverty—high taxation the waste of large sums of money in unproductive works, and the heavy

drainage of our money to foreign countries—the effects of an unsympathetic alien domination.

*It is essential for a proper presentation of the case to cast a retrospective look behind, and to give a hurried outline to our readers of that phase of Indian economical history which has been primarily affected by the change of governments*

Hindu India—or India before the 11th century—was divided into a number of more or less petty States and Principalities like the Italy of the Middle Ages. To calculate the revenues of the several dynasties of kings who ruled simultaneously in India is an hopeless task but from the Institutes of Manu—that invaluable mine of ancient Indian history—and from the writings of foreign annalists, spec-



ally of Strabo—one of the most reliable of Greek historians,—we gather that the Hindu kings derived their revenue chiefly from (1) land, (2) customs and excise duties, and (3) license tax.

The demand upon the land, like the tithe in Europe consisting in a certain proportion, varied from one-twelfth to one-sixth of the produce of the field, 'according to the soil and the labour necessary to cultivate it \* This was the only big item of public revenue. Commodities of trade, natural productions, and manufactures were very lightly taxed. The imposition on petty traders and shop-keepers was only nominal. Besides these, the king

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\* *Manu Parasara Varisitha, Baudryana, and Vishnu* all say the sixth part of the produce is the standard of assessment.

was entitled to 20 per cent. of the profit of all sales, to all unclaimed property, half of all precious minerals, and a right of pre-emption in some descriptions of goods. An income-tax was also temporarily imposed during the closing days of Hindu Power. When on a few exceptional occasions, the king's proportion of the crop was raised to one-half, as we have alluded to in the preceding chapter, it included, of course, various taxes and cesses, some falling directly upon the land, and others more or less circuitously affecting the cultivation', but the poorer classes were always exempted from all such taxes. We are nowhere told that the land revenue was used as a screw, or ever exceeded an equitable collection or interfered with the living of the poor or felt by the people as an unmiti-

gated burden. Manu and other law givers of India have considered the excessive greed of kings as irreligious. Hiouen Thsang who visited India in the 7th century A D, tells us, in corroboration of this that taxation was always very light in ancient India. Alberuni, in the 11th century, had the same evidence to give.

And we all know how the Hindu kings disposed of their revenue—in large charities, in building temples, in patronage to the Brahmins, in widening the range of human knowledge, in helping to establish arts and manufactures, in peace establishments, and when occasions needed, in little wars. It is recorded of the Pandavas that they cut roads over mountain gorges and built bridges over unfordable streams. Asoka's works of irrigation, his caravan-

seras, his hospitals, dispensaries, and Universities are matters of history. Vikramaditya's patronage to men of letters is well-known wherever the history of literature is studied. Rama's anxious solicitude for the good of his people stands unrivalled, and shines above everything recorded of either Alfred, or Peter, the Great. A number of good roads and quite a large catalogue of works of public utility are ascribed to him, besides that famous geological structure, the Adams Bridge, which is ignorantly supposed to have been built by his camp followers. Nine in every ten Hindu kings have spent large sums of money in sinking wells and planting trees along the public highways. In times of distress or seasons of scarcity, they stretched their helping hands to the

relief of their subjects' sufferings. As for security of life and property, there cannot be found in the whole range of our literature or folk-lore anything complaining of its want. On the other hand it would appear from all trustworthy records that in ancient India more attention was paid to securing peace and order in society than is done to-day.

Let us take a big leap. The India of the Great Mogul was a compact and considerable Empire. Through the untiring labours of Messrs Edward Thomas, Stanley Lane-Poole, General Cunningham, and H G Keene, the most eminent Indian numismatists of our time, we have been able to get at some fair idea of what this Empire yielded to the coffers of the Timurids. Though there seems to be much confusion

in the accounts given by each one of the above, and though not unfrequently one of them is seen contradicting the other, it appears from their investigations that the actually realised revenue of the Mogul Emperors, from the accession of Akbar down to the death of Aurangzebe, for a period covering more than a century, did not average more than 30 crores of Rupees a-year. We dismiss the statements made on this point by such foreign travellers as Captain Hawkins, who lived at the court of Jehangir and to whom the Emperor gave leave to establish a factory at Surat, Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of James I, king of England, Bernier who lived with Shah Jehan, Dr Broughton who cured the Emperor's daughter, and Gemelli Careri, who

visited the camp of Aurangzebe at Galgala in 1695, as unreliable, for though all of them were, no doubt, veracious chroniclers, their statements do not tally with one another, in spite of Mr. Lane-Poole's attempt to give them a tone of consistency. The discrepancies to be met with in their writings occur owing to the facts that either (1), they must have received exaggerated accounts from their informants, as it is a common practice in the East to impose upon foreigners by false reports in order to show off the strength and grandeur of one's position ; or (2), they must themselves have been led to form a very extravagant notion of the Mogul revenue by the splendours of the Delhi Court and the Peacock Throne, parallels of which could be found nowhere in the history of the West, not even in the

Courts of Diocletian, of Charlemagne, of Charles V., and of Ferdinand and Isabella ; or (3). they must have made a sorry confusion between the currency of their respective countries and that of India , or (4), what Sir Alexander Cunningham suggests, they must have relied upon 'the official demand rather than the amount actually realised.'

The authorities whom Mr. Thomas quotes and Messrs Elliot. and Dowson have introduced into their *History of India* all give figures for total revenue, an average of what has already been struck before. European apologists of British taxation try to explain this fact away by telling us that the above represented the land-revenue only. There can be found no Hindu or Mahometan



historian whose authority can be quoted in support of this theory, and though the Emperors' personal treasures were considerably augmented by a multitude of private presents and extortions, it can hardly be said that the legitimate revenue of the Moguls—which must have included, besides the land-tax, various taxes of an oppressive nature like the capitation-tax or the *Zizya*—exceeded on an average 30 crores of Rupees a year. And 30 crores of Rupees, remembering the purchasing power of silver in the 16th and the 17th century as expressed in the staple food-grains of India, was more than double that sum of to-day.

Almost the whole of this revenue—vast as it was—was spent in this country and ultimately shared in by the people. For,

Delhi Emperors none of them, happily undertook any crescentades, or waged any war for altruistic motives, but they no doubt helped many thousands of people to undertake distant journeys to Mēcca and spend a good deal of money in Arabia. Foreign traders and merchants were now and then encouraged, but genuine Indian industries thrived without any impediment. No home charges no costly civil and military administration no exchange difficulty, nor any pushing beyond the frontiers. This in fact is the history of Mogul finances in a nutshell.

Now let us come to our own times. British India—as reconstructed by Lord Lawrence and consolidated by Lord Mayo—is a vaster country than what either Chandragupta or Asoka Akbar or Aurang

rebe held sway over. Upon this increased area, though from a poorer people, our present government raises at this day a gross revenue three times as much as that realised by the descendants of Tamerlane. The total British Indian revenue of to-day appears to be about five times more than what Gibbon estimated as the revenue of the Roman Empire at the height of its prosperity.

To do, however, our government justice, it must be premised that the 92 crores of Rupees which it raises from India at the present day are not all derived from taxation or land-revenue. The question whether the land-revenue is a tax or not is no longer an open one, for it has a long time since exceeded the economic rent in many parts of the country, as we have seen before, and

the margin of cultivation has risen in spite of an enormous increase in the population. Much of this 92 crores of Rupees—nearly three-eighths—comes from sources other than the above. The government of the Crown retains to this day some of the instincts of the old East India Company, and a considerable part of its income is derived from purely business transactions. Opium—however unchristian and unjustifiable the revenue derived from this source may be,—Railways and Irrigation works, Registration, Telegraphs, the Post Offices, and many other small items of business contribute rather liberally to the coffers of the Imperial Exchequer. Though to an Oriental, the swelling of State revenues by such heads as ‘Law and Justice,’ ‘Education,’ or ‘Police’ appears somewhat paradoxical,

we have almost been used to it and it is late in the day to raise any hue and cry against this practice

These various sources of revenue apart, let us now interest ourselves with the actual taxation of British India. Except town-rates and local taxation, raised to the extent of several crores for roads, schools and other local improvements the following table will speak for every other form of taxation

Heads of taxation	1870-71	1880-81	1890-91	Budget Estimate 1890-96
	Rs	Rs	Rs	Rs
Land Revenue	205 2 3 230	211 1 9 300	240 452 090	203 606 000
Salt	61 062 000	71 153 880	87 236 000	86 913 000
Stamps	23 103 100	32 505 810	40 650 090	46 400 000
Excise	37 44 000	31 352 200	42 478 000	5 343 000
Customs	26 700 000	2 356 100	17 432 100	15 147 000
Assessed Tax	20 100 000	2 557 000	16 100 000	17 000 000
Provincial Rates		2 713 700	31 312 400	36 400 000
Grand Total	302 060 000	404 504 200	441 371 000	555 113 000

The land revenue of British India is little less than one-half of its total net revenue

Next to land, salt yields the most considerable income. The duty upon salt is now an uniform rate of Rs 2-8 as. a maund, equivalent to an annual tax of about 7 d. per head of the population.

The land-tax and the salt-tax are the only two taxes that touch the purse of all directly. The duty recently imposed on customs taxes all those foreign articles of consumption which almost all of us require for our daily use, from a needle upwards. The Income-tax touches all who have an income of over Rs 500 a year. The excise duties fall to a certain extent upon the shoulders of the people, for, though intoxicating liquors are not in common use, deleterious drugs are a fashion amongst numerous classes. Those whose hands are free from litigation have nothing to

care for the 'stamps.' And to the Provincial Rates, except only a few, all people have to contribute, more or less. In British India, no classes of people are entirely exempt from taxation.

The average annual taxation of British India for the 12 years, 1880-91, was  $41\frac{1}{4}$  crores against  $35\frac{1}{3}$  crores during the ten years ending in 1879. The average rate of actual taxation per head for the first 12 years was Re 1-14 as., or in 1890-91 alone 3 pies less than Rs. 2-2 as. Now, it is about Rs 2-5 as.

Says Fortens in his spirited and impartial history of the *Empire in Asia* : 'If the purses are small and nearly empty, a tax of a rupee may be extortionate, if the purses are deep and full, the exaction of a £ 5 note may be light. If we compare

the £50,000,000 of Indian revenue with the £72,000,000 of British revenue, (*Empire in Asia* was published in 1872), the sole question worth asking is, how do the national incomes stand, out of which the two amounts are drawn. All else but this is mere irrelevancy and trifling. What then do we find? From the most authentic sources we gather that the total production of the Indian Empire is under £300 000,000 a year, that of the United Kingdom is about £900,000,000 sterling. This would give a taxation of 3s 4d in the pound in India, and less than 1s 8d in the pound in England. The difference, however, between the incidence of the two burthens is enormously increased by the circumstance that nineteen-twentieths of our taxes are annually, monthly, it might



almost be said daily re-spent amongst us ; while of the revenues of India a large portion is exported hither to furnish us with extra means of comfort and of luxury.'

• Speaking immediately after the suppression of the Mutiny, John Bright said that the taxes of India were more onerous and oppressive than were the taxes of any other country in the world. Twenty years after, at Birmingham, he returned to the same charge, and said : 'you cannot turn the screw any more, and that, if you do, something worse than a deficient revenue may follow.' Mr. Fawcett, in his day one of the ablest champions of the Indian people, gave it out as his opinion in *Indian Finance* that taxes in India were cruelly strained to the uttermost. And nobody can venture to whisper even an

uncharitable word against the deliberate convictions of John Bright and Henry Fawcett—two of the most honourable British statesmen of the century.

The incidence of taxation—herein lies the greater canker. It is at once both unequal and insidious, and is sufficient to condemn the 'yoke of the foreigner.' Upon the agricultural and the labouring classes of our people, the salt-tax presses most hard. To the poorer middle classes, the income-tax collector comes as the most unwelcome visitor. It is also widely known that the land revenue, in some parts of the country, is only limited by the physical capacity of the yield.

To these facts, now, let us draw our attention, one by one.

Salt is an article of prime necessity—the

principal condiment of the Indian poor. On taxes on the necessities of life John Stuart Mill says : 'Such taxes are always liable to encroach on what should be left untaxed, the incomes barely sufficient for healthful existence ; and on the most favourable supposition, namely, that wages rise to compensate the labourers for the tax, it operates as a peculiar tax on profits, which is at once unjust, and detrimental to national wealth.'

'The Salt Tax,' says the historian of *India under Victoria*, 'is a barbarous relic of the days when almost everything in India was taxed by the Mughals. In those days, however, the tax seems to have never risen above eight annas, or a shilling, the maund of 82 pounds. It was left for English statesmen of the nineteenth century

fact that in many cases, while the consumption of salt by the people themselves is not diminished, the amount of salt given to the cattle has diminished greatly. It is, no doubt, contrary to public policy to maintain at a high rate a tax which has a practical tendency to discourage and interfere with the progress and advancement of agriculture.'

India Revenue Account's Debate' of 1889 and 1890 to this important matter. A correspondent writing recently to the *Globe* newspaper of London directs the attention of the public to the fact, maintained by the best authorities on the subject, that leprosy, being communicable and purely a disease of the blood, is most likely to attack people whose blood has lost its proper proportion of saline constituents.

And when we remember that a morsel of boiled rice and a pinch of salt is often the only bill of fare with which about a third of our population have to satisfy their hunger and remain content, it is impossible to find any justification for this duty. Upon every seer of salt he consumes, the agriculturist or the labourer has to pay a duty of one anna clear. 'It

is,' say the Herschell Committee, 'in the nature of a poll-tax which falls on all classes but presses most heavily on the very poor.'

The imposition of the *Gabelle* by Louis XVI. and the harassing nature of the tax (and what was it compared to the salt prosecutions of our East Coast and of other parts of the country where occasional smuggling may not be impossible?), is adduced by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* last year as one of the chief causes of the French Revolution. Our rulers must indeed be very indifferent and short-sighted observers of facts if they do not see that the salt-tax presses harder upon the people of India than did the *Gabelle* upon the French nation a century ago. The strong resentment with

which a similar duty in Italy is looked upon by the people there may not also be wholly unknown to the Indian bureaucracy. A sense of deep wrong is rankling in the hearts of our plebeian classes which it is not entirely safe to ignore.

But the question is, who is more to be pitied, the peasant who is robbed of his necessary pinch of salt, or the Government that is reduced to the extremity of falling upon such a commodity for taxation ?

As the salt-tax is to the lower, so the income tax is to the poorer, middle classes. This tax was first imposed in 1859 by Mr. James Wilson, a distinguished financier, as part of a scheme for 'rescuing India from financial collapse.' Lowered considerably by the succeeding Finance Minister, Mr. Samuel Laing, it was entirely repealed

by Sir Charles Trevelyan in 1865. Financial strain again compelled Lord Mayo's Government to re-impose this tax in March 1869 and after a chequered career of a few years, was again repealed in 1873 by Lord Northbrook. One year before it met this fate, the minimum sum to be taxed was reduced to Rs 1000. Act II. of 1886, passed during Lord Dufferin's Viceroyalty, re-imposing this tax, is still in force. Any person whose income exceeds the modest sum of five hundred Rupees a year is liable to be assessed under the present Income-tax Act.

Now, a man earning less than Rs 42 a month has generally to maintain a large family and live somehow like a gentleman. And the assesseees of the lowest classes of the tax in Lower Bengal



—those with incomes of from 500 to 1000 Rupees per annum—constitute the majority or 73 per cent. of the total number assessed. In other parts of the country, perhaps, a larger number of people fall under the lowest class of this tax. With an imported civilisation, leather shoes and linen shirts have become to this class of people almost as necessities of life. The ordinary assessee to the income-tax requires them as much as they are required by an Englishman or a Scotchman. If he were to appear in public without them, he would be set down as having broken some of the most essential rules of decency. Our intercourse with England and other western countries has raised the standard of living, of housing, and of clothing of the entire population, while, as

everybody knows, the incomes of the middle classes are growing beautifully less, the purchasing power of the Rupee is decreasing very appreciably, and living is getting dearer, from year to year. If one were to compare the expenses of an Englishman with £150 a year (less than this is not taxed in England) with those of a Hindu with Rupees 500, it will prove very much to the disadvantage of the latter. For, though living in England costs much more than it does in India, an ordinary Englishman has seldom any further item of expenditure than what he chooses to spend on himself. He has seldom a family to maintain, no social or religious obligations of a costly nature to perform. A Hindu is religiously bound to marry, to provide for a whole host of relations

and friends, to educate their children, nephews, and not unfrequently distant cousins, and to spend a heavy sum of money in marriages and *shadhs*. Besides these, he has a hundred and one other small demands to meet on behalf of his religion and society. If meeting all these numerous calls upon his slender purse, he is further required to pay a number of municipal bills and then again pay a few extra *coms* for the income-tax, surely, surely, his lot must be considered particularly hard and unenviably sad. Does it stand to reason that such a man should be required to contribute directly so much per Rupee to the Imperial Exchequer that the Government may grant an unrighteous compensation to the British soldier and the English civilian? The Honble Mr. Stevens put

this question in very appropriate terms in the Viceregal Council on March 12, last, in connection with the discussion of the Indian Tariff Act. 'When I think of these patient, laborious, indispensable people toiling in silence, while their difficulties close round them like the collapsing chamber in the romance, I am impelled to ask your Lordship's Government to consider whether their relief from the tax does not claim from an Indian Administration infinitely more attention than a perhaps trivial increase in the gains of Lancashire manufacturers?'

To the question of the land-tax—how it is being daily increased by fleecing our agricultural population—I have already referred sufficiently in the last chapter. Our government can lay no moral claim

upon our land, for the security to life and property it pretends to confer upon our agricultural population is a mere statute-book security, it being almost powerless to check the tremendous growth of the spirit of lording it over to be met with everywhere in the country. An English cultivator is satisfied to get his money's value in the shape of the strong protection which he receives from the hands of those to whom he pays his taxes, so much so that the fact that his house is his castle has almost passed into a proverb. And here, after a century and a half of English rule the lower classes find that they are more helpless now than they ever were before. In order, therefore, to justify this tax our government must make the landowning classes and the Anglo-Indian community

feel that no violent hand can ever be laid, not only in the light of day but also in the darkness of night upon either the person or the purse or the possessions of the ryot with impunity.

We forbear from dissecting this topic further. Probably we have discoursed enough to show that all the burden of mismanaged finance is ultimately laid on the back of the poor, the last straw only now being wanting to break it. And just think how the rich and the leisured escape by making only a nominal contribution to the Treasury ! Mr. Jamsetjee N. Tata, one of the richest men in Bombay and a proprietor of one of the largest cotton mills in India, thus wrote to the *London Daily Chronicle* a few months ago : ‘I have always held the opinion that all taxation in India bears

most heavily on the poor and most lightly on the well-to-do classes. Those whose life and property require the greatest protection from Government have the least to pay for it, while those who have nearly nothing to lose, even by a change of Government, have often to forego their meals to pay the dues of Government. All taxes are so regulated, that the poorest subject contributes nearly an equal share

Indeed, the ryots not only contribute the largest and the most elastic portion of the financial resources of the Empire, but in 1871, it was calculated that the upper classes paid only 1 per cent. on their income to taxation proper, whilst the classes below the income-tax contributed as much as 5 per cent. of their means. The difference is not less now.

‘Tell me the finances of a country,’ said John Bright, ‘and I will tell you the form of government that obtains there.’ Indeed, nothing is a better or truer index of how India is being governed by England than the history of our present-day finances. We have seen how our revenue is raised and it remains for us to see how it is spent. We regret that the ends do not justify the means. Even a superficial study



We ourselves do not mean to be captious, and have no silly intentions to carp at the splendid achievements of British Administration in India—an Administration which has been 'steadily occupied in preventing famine, alleviating distress, extirpating savage customs, and multiplying the agencies of civilisation and progress.' But what we want to point out is simply—and let us not be misunderstood—that so much money is raised from this poor country (and we have seen how it is raised), and of what is raised so much is spent in unproductive works and drained away to foreign countries, thus annually and continually increasing the bulk of our national poverty.

But before we return to any categorical charges, let us take a hasty glance over

with the great spending departments, Lord Mayo converted a chronic deficit into a steady surplus. But twenty years after the country passed to the Crown, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton, the flood came in upon us, a policy of spendthrift government was inaugurated, and the imperial expenditure was more than doubled. Once again during Lord Ripon's proconsulship did India enjoy for a few years financial equilibrium. To-day we find to our cost how squeezing is the British tax-collector and how nothing is too sacred for his relentless calculations, and yet our Government was never before more hopelessly at sea. And all this because our increased expenditure now greatly outstrips our increased revenue. Even an Imperialist ruler like

Lord Dalhousie could see his way to govern this Empire—but then there was no Baluchistan or Burmah to look after—at about a half of its present cost. It is however remarkable that whenever Viceroys have wished to reduce expenditure by exercising vigilant economy, their efforts have generally been crowned with success.

Military and the Civil Services—a disproportionately large portion of which is unproductive—has hitherto defeated all hopes of financial equilibrium.

‘Just think for a moment of the vast sum of money annually spent on the army? It is true that under the Mogal Emperors the country had to pay a heavy militia or what was called *bhumi*, but there can be no manner of doubt that the Mogal army expenditure has been considerably thrown into the shade by the military extravagance of British India, and we are threatened by General Brackenbury that this expenditure ‘will in future continue to increase in a most extraordinary way.’

The following table has been prepared in justification of General Brackenbury’s dark prophecy.

of the British soldier is fixed in sterling and is based on contract. We have to-day a smaller army than we had before the Mutiny, but the European is now the predominating element. While European soldiers have nearly doubled, natives have been reduced by about 70 thousand, since the great Revolt. Every new battalion brought out from England means a strain, however small, upon the finances of, and every native regiment disbanded means an additional demand, however insignificant, upon the limited sustaining power of, the land. 70 thousand people thrown out of employment from the army itself have not added in appreciably to the volume of our national poverty. Much of this change in the constitution of the Indian army is due to the recommendations of the Royal Commission

that was appointed in 1858 to report upon a scheme for the reorganisation of the army, and to the clever and 'diplomatic move made in recent years by the author of the third Burmese War.

bilisation was costly and general transport very expensive, and palatial barracks had to be built and various sanitary measures had to be carried out throughout the country for the accomodation and health of the soldiers, India was required to pay less than half of its present rate for every unit of the army. And yet this John Company's army, Lord William Bentinck decidedly pronounced in 1835, was 'the most expensive in the world.

Many of our readers may not be aware that no country in this world except Austria and Italy spends so large a proportion of its revenue for the maintenance of an Army. England and France spend less than one fifth of their total revenue for their armed forces, and there is a constant tendency to decrease this ex

penditure. In America, this item is hardly worth counting, for the Democracy of the States has little or no charm for enormous permanent forces. Our readers will probably be surprised to learn that even war-loving and autocratic Russia spends less than one-fourth of its revenue for both its army and navy together. Keeping an army exceeding one's resources has brought ruin upon Austria and is about to involve Italy in financial bankruptcy.

The eager desire of English politicians to fish in the troubled waters of Central Asian politics, and make the Indian army a question of Imperial, rather than of Indian, policy was sure to bring in a train of mischief in the fulness of time. The insistence of the India Office to plant a



British agency at Herat, in 1876, throwing the doctrine of *laissez-faire* so persistently maintained by Canning, Lawrence, and Mayo to the winds, and Lord Northbrook's resignation in order not to be a party to such a transaction were decisive oscillations of the pendulum. It was an evil day indeed for India when Benjamin Disraeli was entrusted with the helm of the British Empire. From his fertile brain emanated those two magnetic phrases which are responsible for so much of waste and of oppression amongst us. 'Scientific frontier' and the 'Forward Policy' owe not a little of their strength to their first sponsor, the author of 'Vivian Grey' and 'Coningsby'. As ill luck would have it, the Earl of Beaconsfield found a very ready tool in another erratic genius, the late 'Owen

Meredith.' A novelist and a poet and dramatist—no wonder that they should be oppressed with the fierce nightmare of Russophobia. From a Jew whom the wisest of his countrymen characterised as a 'political juggler,' and who was unquestionably the dreamiest of all English statesmen, and from a Viceroy, who according to his own finding was 'cheating' the people of the country which he was entrusted to govern and administer, India could not expect anything worthier. Probably no two other men have inflicted a greater injury on this country than Lords Beaconsfield and Lytton. Next to these stand the names of Lord Dufferin and Ava and Lord Roberts of Kandahar whose joint labours in India can be summed up in two words 'Military Preparedness.' From the

days of Lord Lytton down to the assumption of the reins of office by Lord Elgin, excepting the term of office of the Marquis of Ripon—in whom no better man has come out to India as the Queen's Representative—and who alone of all Indian proconsuls kept an open mind in all public questions—our military expenditure has been increasing in leaps and bounds and swelling the Budget accounts to most fearful proportions

The Afghan war—a war with which, according to an impartial historian, the people of India had no substantial concern—‘a war’, according to John Bright, ‘commanded by the English Cabinet, for objects supposed to be English, but which, in my opinion, were of no advantage either to England or India—cost us the large

sum of 113,827,870 Rupees. If Lord Lytton had not cared for the bubble reputation by making war upon the warlike borderers of Afghanistan, and Lord Salisbury—whose ears were open only to the counsels of such men as Rawlinson and Bartle Frere and other hot-brained panic-mongers—had not been the presiding genius of the India Office, probably nobody would ever have heard of the second Afghan War. This war, let alone all moral considerations, has laid the foundation stone of a good crop of imbroglios. From that unhappy date our military authorities have known no rest, no peace. They have got nothing but Russia and Afghanistan in their brains. To-day a frontier aggression requires to be put down by bayonets, to-morrow a trans-Sulaiman tribe to be crushed. Now

it is Panjdeh, then it is the Pamirs, again it is Herat. As for punitive expeditions and leviathan operations, which Sir George Campbell called 'ignoble little wars,' there is practically no end. The apparition that has haunted Peterhoff for a series of years must be fought out to the bitter end, The ghost of the Czar of all the Russias has murdered sleep in Simla. It is ceaseless activity and feverish excitement there. A pair of Cossack boots will sometimes throw the entire Simla clique into wild hysterics. Some mischief is supposed to be brewing in a remote Central Asian district, and lo ! the whole school of preparedness is up in arms. Some dream is reported to have haunted the Amir, and behold ! a mission is arranged. Far away in the East a big fire is lurking beneath the Mekong Valley,

and in the North we are continually piercing beyond the Ever lasting Snows Everywhere our governors are recklessly going out of the natural and physical boundaries of the country, looking for fresh fields and pastures new Beluchistan has been occupied and Upper Burmah annexed, and who knows what fate awaits the buffer state of Afghanistan in the near future ! And wherever in the East British guns will roar, there the Indian taxpayer will have to bear the burden of war, annexation, pacification, administration, and all other necessary expenses The Government of India's war bill for the last 18 years amount to over 300 crores of Rupees, and besides that we have paid several crores of Rupees up to date for the administration of Burmah—a country

which was never meant to be an integral part of India—and for the occupation of Beluchistan—a province which is forcibly included in the Empire. Yet like chasing the will-o'-the-wisp, the scientific frontiers, which Sir Alfred Lyall has beautifully described as 'that promised borderland whose margin seems to fade for ever as we follow it, remain undiscovered to this day, and the congeries of nations lying beyond the limits of India are doomed to have no peace, no rest. When shall we abandon the 'forward policy' as insane ?

Where all this shall lead us to, it is impossible to predict. The maintaining of a vast standing army, and this Afghan policy has necessitated an enormous increase in the army, and the turning of a frontier province into a huge permanent military

camp, are really invitations of hostility—an indirect challenge to measure swords—besides being one of the principal causes of national impoverishment. A leopard would sooner change his spots than Tommy Atkins cease to long for active service. And a day may come when Russia may take a hint from all our forward movements and on some plausible pretext or other try to improve her position 'this side of Asia. What may be the issue of that great struggle no man can foresee. But alas! we have already pushed ourselves into regions where our frontiers are bound to be ever in the 'fluid state, and retreat without loss of dignity' may be impossible. Yet, let us hope wise counsels will at last prevail over all hypocritical objections.

Next to the Afghan policy, the wisdom



present book is intended is indissolubly bound up with the martial policy of the Government of India. It has been the cause of our salt and the income taxes, and in the future no man knows how many more burdens are to be laid upon our back, for fresh taxation is constantly hanging over our heads like Damocles' sword. If the expenses of all this wild goose-chasing were met by the British Treasury, probably we would not have a word to say upon this painful subject. We do not care much for England's foreign policy and are undoubtedly the better for having nothing to do with it. But when all these are done with our money—money most hardly earned—it is our sacred duty to raise a timely and spirited protest against the policy which has destroyed the financial

equilibrium of the country and has spread disquiet amongst her people.

Here, we have one question to ask. If India is ever won by Russia (God forbid the calamity), will India be the only loser? Will not England's greatest strength and her most valuable market be lost to her too? Sir Charles Dilke tells us of 'the hopeless insularity that would overtake the British people if deprived of the romantic interest that the possession of India lends to our national life.' 'Without India, England would cease to be a nation,' said Lord Randolph Churchill not very many years ago. Professor Seeley speaks of India as 'a prize of absolutely incalculable value to England.' And Lecky says, 'India is proving a school of inestimable value for maintaining some of the best and most

masculine qualities of our race', though Mr Labouchere seems to entertain a contrary view. Under these circumstances, why should the Indian taxpayer alone bear all the heavy costs of military aggrandisements in the heart of Central Asia? If the advantages are to be shared in equally—and who does not know that England reaps a richer harvest?—why should not all our military expenditure be divided? When full 13 086 840 Rupees was saddled upon India as the expenses of the war in Abyssinia, conducted against King Theodore in 1868, in spite of Lord Lawrence's spirited re-

spectively to pay their due share of common expenses. Well, a partnership, indeed, of which we have never heard ever since ! The Indian Mutiny, the Afghan and the Burmese Wars, and similar other operations have, as everybody knows, left us a good legacy of debts—shall England ever condescend to help us out of them ? How British statesmanship has so long turned a deaf ear to the plaintive appeal of Lord Mayo against compelling ‘the people of India to contribute one farthing more to military expenditure than the safety and the defence of the country absolutely demand’, it is impossible to see.

“The people”, says Adam Smith, ‘who compose a numerous and splendid court, a great ecclesiastical establishment, great fleets and armies, who in times of peace

number to encroach upon their capitals, upon the funds destined for the maintenance of productive labour, that all the frugality and good conduct of individuals may not be able to compensate the waste and degradation of produce occasioned by this violent and forced encroachment.' Much of this theory has been successfully combated by political economists of a newer school, more specially by M. Say and Mr. M'Culloch, and security of property, internal peace, and defence of the country are now held essential to the exercise of every species of industry, and those people who are entrusted with these tasks can be classed as those who are super-eminently productive. But it is admitted on all hands that really a great loss is incurred by the country where such functionaries

have been multiplied beyond a reasonable limit or are rewarded beyond its normal capacity for payment

This brings us to two most vital questions. First, if the Army at present maintained by our purse is not too numerous or in excess of our absolute requirements, and secondly, if our slender purse is not already too heavily burdened with the liberal rewards paid to it. The first is answered by the Simla Army Commission of 1878 and by the famous dissentient minute of Sir Auckland Colvin and Mr C P Ilbert on the permanent increase in the numerical strength of the Indian Army (August, 1885). For the second, the heavy volume of our national debt and the increasing and almost annual deficits in our treasury will speak with silent eloquence.

The Army Commissioners say : 'For operations against Russia, or Afghanistan assisted by Russia, a force of two army corps, or 50,000 to 60,000 fighting men, might possibly be necessary. No one has even suggested that the Army of India should be maintained at a strength necessary to put into the field a larger force than this.'

Regarding Lord Dufferin's proposal to increase the strength of the Army by 27,000 men, a proposal no sooner proposed than carried into execution, Sir A. Colvin and Mr. Ilbert wrote : "The question then narrows itself to this : 'Is it the duty of the Government of India to maintain and charge to Indian revenues a permanent addition to its forces, not required for India, but available for the pur-

pose of extending and securing its dominion beyond India ?" Replying to this emphatically in the negative, they proceed : 'a standing Army which is larger than is necessary for home requirements will be a tempting, and almost an irresistible, weapon of offence beyond the border.' It is significant that they made no secret of the fact that many of our recent military engagements were 'very costly unproductive works.'

Now, let us turn our attention to the salaries of Civil Departments. The expenses necessary for the upkeep of these departments, however enormous, do not put any very heavy strain on the Exchequer. It is the salaries of the Civil Officers that cause a considerable drain on the resources of India and make the country one of the most expensively-go-



verned in the world. There is no doubt that the Civil Services of India contain some of the most efficient and the best men in the world, and whatever precipitate agitators or hungry place hunters might say to the contrary, the European Civil Officer is still all but universally respected for maintaining peace and order in the country, and is looked up to by the people as the messenger of a better enlightenment and civilisation. Aberrations of long headed civilians and of boy-magistrates are rather growing a little too common at the present day, but let us hope that they will disappear with

Only we object to the large salaries they draw ! These salaries are too high, and are paid on the principle of attracting able and intelligent men to this country. The ever-increasing struggle for existence at home drives many poor and worthy people now-a-days to seek employment in this distant land. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that an Indian career now possesses more attraction than is often supposed. India has changed mightily since the present high rate of salaries paid to its European officers was fixed by statute. Both from a sanitary and a general point of view, India is day by day getting more agreeable and comfortable to the average European. The opening of the Suez Canal makes him no longer look upon India as a place of

thanks to Lord Lansdowne, the rupee salary of every officer has been increased by the exchange compensation allowance), are ridiculously high and the pruning knife must be applied at an early date. John Bright has very truly said that 'the Civil Services (of India) receive a rate of payment which would be incredible if we did not know it to be true, and which, knowing it to be true, we must admit to be monstrous.'

After the military and the civil the next most spending branch is the Public Works Department. Of all Lord Dalhousie's measures, the establishment of this department in 1854 upon its present basis showed the least concern for the tax-paying communities of British India. This branch now includes railways, roads,

bridges, canals, irrigation, drainage, buildings, and a whole host of works of like nature. It is worked by an inconceivably large and costly establishment and absorbs well-nigh one-fifth of our total revenue.

It is impossible to condemn in too strong terms the reckless way in which public money is spent in this department. Under-hand jobbery and thoughtless waste are almost every-day affairs under its aegis. Lord Mayo characterised some of the expenditure of this department as 'a recklessness little short of robbery.' There can, however, be found no plausible reason why such a gigantic Government monopoly should not be discontinued, and the whole of the works done by it now thrown open to public competition. He must be a bold man, indeed, who in a

free country like England would dare suggest to make the Public Works a gigantic Government monopoly. Nowhere in the world is private enterprise slighted or throttled in the way it is done in India—private enterprise which is so essential to the wealth of a nation.

We have been told in defence that 'Government is bound to get its own work done as well and economically as possible ; and that this can be better done by means of its own staff, than by employing private agency.' This sophistry has been exploded by the vast amount of evidence recorded against it by the Selected Committee of the House of Commons that sat from 1871-73, by the Public Service Commission, and the Finance Committee. It is rather late in the day to try to impose

upon the public mind such an apparent untruth as that the P. W. D. has a scrupulous eye to economy.

To-day a river is forded, to-morrow a bridge is constructed—a decade hence thorough repairs become urgently required for them. Here a canal is opened at extravagant cost only to be silted up in a few years, there a palatial public building is erected at a fabulous expense to come

in the Bolan river and the wiping out of the Hurnai line at Mud Gorge will speak of the wisdom of our P. W. D. more than anything else. And yet have not millions of public money been unnecessarily squandered upon these unscientific projects? Yet all these precious schemes require to be supported, at the expense of the famishing ryot, by a special and almost an useless department of the Government, costing the country over £500,000 a year.

A passing word as to the Indian Ecclesiastical Establishment. To make heathen India--where there are less native Christians than there are in the small island of Madagascar--pay the cost of a Christian Church is ridiculously inconsistent. Yet we are made to pay over 16 lacks annually to maintain the Anglican Church which the

Crown Colonies have ceased to support since 1868.

We shall not touch upon the expenses incurred for the civil charges or for the Post Offices, the Telegraphs, and other cognate departments, for not only are they beside our point but some of them also pay their own way.

We will now come to the second part of our enquiry—the drainage of our money to foreign countries. This is the more important section, for to this drainage we owe not to an inconsiderable extent our national impoverishment.

India's public debt is enormous. It has mounted up with a headlong speed. It is above 2,230,000,000 Rupees, or more than Rupees ten per head of the population of the entire British provinces. Much of this



debt has been contracted for war purposes, for the Sepoy Mutiny, Famine Relief, Public Works, and other works of public utility. The debt is divided between India and England, our gold liabilities being quite out of proportion to our Rupee debt. The interest charged for India's sterling debt to England alone amount to about £2,450 000 annually. Besides this, India has to pay guaranteed interest to some Railways, interest on capital deposited on account of some State Railways, as well as annuities in purchase of others. The total railway revenue expenditure in England annually amounts to about £5,750 000. This together with the interest on the ordinary debt swells this charge to much over £8 000,000. Sir David Barbour recently concluded a very valuable paper on 'India

and the Currency Question' thus: 'If India is to be preserved from future financial embarrassment the whole system of piling up gold obligations, even for so beneficial a result as the more rapid construction of railways, and of borrowing in gold, openly or covertly, in order to meet current obligations, must cease.'

Next comes the purchase of stores for the various departments, such as the Army, the Marine, the Telegraph, the Public Works, the Post Office, the Mint and Currency requisites, which absorb no less than £2,000,000 clear every year. A commission, we learn on the authority of Mr. Dacosta, appointed some years ago to report on certain stores sent out for the port of Calcutta, found that these stores 'had cost some 40 per cent. more than their market value.'

The next item is 'pensions and allowances', the total expenditure under this head being £4,600,000 a year, which amounts to about 16 per cent. of the entire net revenue of India. Sir John Gorst, a late Under-Secretary of State for India, said in one of his speeches a few years ago : 'In India, the proportion that the pension bears to the pay is higher than almost in any other country in the world.'

The next is military expenditure. For effective and non-effective military services, together with the expenses for the Indian troop service and transports etc., we have about £1,350,000 to pay to England year after year. The effective charge means the cost of the soldier recruited and trained in England before he comes to India for service, and absorbs every

subjects from the contribution to the China Embassy and the expenses of the Mission of Persia to the purchase of stallions and payments to the annuitants of the late Red Sea and Indian Telegraph Co., together with a subsidy for the cable between Mauritius and the continent of Africa can be conveniently grouped together as 'various items and cost us about £350,000 a year. The last, though not the least is the expense of the India Office which amounts to £141,600 in every twelvemonths

These charges—which amounted to only £7,000 000 in 1870 now come up to above seventeen millions sterling annually—are met by the Secretary of State for India indirectly from the surplus money resulting from the excess of the Indian export, over its import, trade India does

not pay any tribute to England, but the 'home charges' more than compensate for the want of direct tribute. The 'home charges' do not absorb all the balance of trade which we have mentioned in the first chapter, but a little less than two-thirds of it. More than one-third returns to India, indeed, in hard cash, only to find its way back again to European pockets. It has been estimated that India, from 1884 to 1891, had a 'yearly balance of 150,000,000 Rupees from her export trade, for which she received payment in silver and gold.' Who is benefited by this large sum—the Indian cultivator or the European merchant? Anybody who keeps accurate information on the subject knows that our foreign and sea-borne trade is to-day almost entirely in the

hands of the foreign merchant. Raw cotton in Bombay and jute in Calcutta, besides tea, coffee, and indigo to a considerable extent, are almost exclusively exported by European firms. And much of the remainder of our export trade is not done without considerable European intervention. So, almost all the profits go ultimately to European pockets and scarcely any benefits are reaped by the Indian cultivator. Only he drudges for the European merchant as a day-labourer, getting stunted wages barely sufficient to drag on his miserable existence.

Mr. Frederick Pincott writing to an Indian newspaper speaks thus on this subject: 'The trade of India, as it is called, is really one branch of the trade of Europe. It is carried on by European capital and Euro-

pean enterprise, and is conducted by European managers, and the entire profit goes into European pockets, and all the savings are remitted to Europe. Indians have allowed themselves to sink into the condition of coolies who fetch and carry and labour for the enterprising European.' Mr. J. A. Baines, the Imperial Census Commissioner of 1891, admits that almost all the great Indian industries 'are developed by English capital, the interest on which finds its way back to England to the impoverishment of India.' In an article on 'Indian trade, and trade in India,' the following remarks are made in *India* (August, 1894): 'The large figures in Annual Reports which record the trade carried on with India really represent the crops grown, the articles manufactured, and

the work done, on Indian soil by European capital under European management, for the profit of European capitalists. The only part that India has in the trade is that of supplying the coolie-labour, and this is little better than legalised slavery. The tea-trade, the jute and indigo trades, the railways, most of the mills, the mining, in fact, all the *big items in the grand total* belong to Europeans. The interest which Indians have in these things is very trifling; and it will be seen that the entire produce of such enterprises leaves India bodily and contributes in no way to the prosperity of the country. Agricultural produce of a general character—food-stuffs, oils, and fibres—is all that remains to India for purposes of exchange; and so completely has that also passed into the



hands of the European that a large portion of the internal trade of the country is carried on by his agents, even in the rural villages. Trade of this kind necessarily pauperises a people. As one native industry after another is supplanted by the enterprising foreigner, no alternative openings for trade exist with which to recoup the loss." The theory of the 'favourable balance of trade' which has been trumpeted forth as the surest index of our national prosperity is thus exploded away.

' The sum of money representing the lion's share of the surplus accruing from the excess of the export over the import trade would in itself be a heavy drainage indeed. But unhappily the tale does not end there. There are the private remittances made by the Civil and the Military

Officers of India falling in the same category. The return granted in 1892 on Mr. Seymour Keay's motion showed that the 28,000 Europeans who held Government posts in India (European soldiers were not included in this calculation) consumed between themselves no less than 154 millions of Rupees a year. Those who know how Anglo-India lives will bear us out when we say that more than two-thirds of this vast sum of money annually finds its way out of the country. Thus we find that the lion's share of the profits of both India's foreign and internal trade as well as a very considerable portion of the money raised by taxation in the country are remorselessly drained away from amongst us.

There is hardly a family in Great Bri.

tain that has not some member employed  
in India in one or other of the various  
services. There is hardly one in every ten  
men in England who does not depend on  
India either directly or otherwise. Speaking  
about ten years ago at Paddington  
on the 'Afghan Frontier,' Lord Randolph  
Churchill thus dilated on this point: 'I  
find that by your 'Indian trade,' and by  
the totally free market which you enjoy in  
India, you are able to keep in active em-  
ployment some 35,000 artisans. Now,  
these 35,000 artisans may each of them  
be taken to represent some four or five  
persons, and taking these with 50,000 or  
60,000 British seamen, and also some  
100,000 British born subjects employed in  
India, paid by India, and sending their  
salaries or a great portion of their salaries

home to England for the maintenance of their families and relations—taking all these figures, I find about two and half millions of your people may be estimated to depend absolutely upon Indian trade.' What a vast amount of money would require to be sent out of India to feed so many British mouths can more easily be guessed than calculated.

'Seventy years ago,' wrote Macaulay, in 1856, 'when the business of a servant of the Company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred or two hundred thousand pounds as speedily as possible', less money was brought home from the East than in our time.' Those who know what a vast amount of wealth was drained off to England in the days of Clive and his successors must find in this fact conclusive

proof of the merciless exploitation of the country at the present day. In his *Problems of Greater Britain*, Sir Charles Dilke says: 'Our kingdom and our people together draw from India some sixty or seventy millions sterling a year in direct income.' Madame Juliette Adam writes, we do not know on what authority, that 'in 27 years, India has been drained to the extent of 5000 millions.' \* Mr. James Wilson, in the *Fortnightly Review* of March 1884, tells us that 'our Indian tribute represents the entire earnings of upwards of 6 millions heads of families, say 30 millions of the people. It means the abstraction of more than one-tenth of the entire sustenance of India every year' But Mr. Wilson's calculations were evidently based on a wrong

\* *La Nouvelle Revue*, July, 1874.

datum for he takes the average annual wages of an Indian to be £5. And when we remember that instead of £5 it is only about 30s or so we find that the earnings of about 80 millions of the people or nearly one third of the entire sustenance of British India is taken away annually from us to enrich the island gardens of the West. Indeed it is no wonder that Lord Roberts should declare that 'the prosperity of the United Kingdom is bound up with the retention of the Indian Empire'.

Speaking of the home charges and the constant and accumulating drain of our money in divers other ways one cannot forget that terrible bugbear, the Exchange. The cloud which in the beginning of the seventies appeared no bigger than a man's hand, has now darkened our financial

horizon and threatens to envelope us in unending chaos. Twenty years ago, in the Budget of 1874-75, about 20 lakhs of Rupees was set down to the head of 'loss by exchange'. Since then there have been very great fluctuations in the relative value of gold and silver, and the English pound every year is rising inconveniently fast in value as compared with the Indian Rupee.

The Rupee is a coin with a history. The more ancient *dinars* and *dirhems* were succeeded by the coins known as *tankhas*, and Elphinstone tells us that Sher Shah changed the name of *tankha* to that of *rupiya* or *rup-ee*, which was adopted by Akbar, and the latter prince fixed the weight and relative value of money on a scale which remained unalter-

ed till the dissolution of the Mogul Empire, and is the basis of that now in use.' The rupee of Akbar contained 164.5 grains of pure silver and was nearly double in value to Queen Elizabeth's shilling. When the Mogul Empire broke up in the middle of the last century, 'numerous mints sprung up, and issued much debased money.'

So, the Rupee is more than three centuries old and since its conception has passed through various masters. Once in as great a demand as the 'almighty dollar,' it has served its day well, and is now almost a spent volcano. The demonetization of silver by Germany and other European countries in recent years, the opening up of various silver mines throughout the world, and the conse-



quent flood of 'cheap' silver into the country are the most potent factors for the present depreciation of the silver currency of India. It is now a dwindling coin with a very gloomy future, the value getting beautifully less from year to year. All our payments to England have to be made in the sterling gold of that country—England is a rich monometallist country which will not accept our poor coin—and hence the loss by exchange. This Exchange is admittedly one of the greatest drains on Indian money—'a drain from which the Indian tax-payer derives no benefit, the nature of which he is unable to understand, and which are the direct result of the existence of a foreign dominion.' 'There has been in the last four years', Sir

David Barbour has calculated, 'an addition to the expenditure of India of at least eighty-three millions of Rupees due to the fall in exchange alone... It is 50 per cent more than the total excise revenue, and almost as much as what is produced by the salt tax.'

There was an universal hope that the currency question would be settled for good by international agreement at the Brussels Conference of 1892, but the Conference having broken up without any definite result, a Committee was appointed by the British Parliament early in 1893 to decide upon this vexed point, under the presidency of that distinguished statesman, Lord Halsell. They conducted their enquiry at Westminster and reported on May 31, 1893, and following

their advice, the Government of India closed the mints, on June 26 of the same year, in a hasty piece of legislation, against the free coinage of silver, with a view to the adoption of a gold standard. This legislative enactment, in the experience of subsequent events, has been found not only to overshoot the mark, but to bring in unexpected troubles. Many other palliatives have been suggested, such as bimetallism, an import duty on silver, and so forth. But we stand to-day where we did a few months ago—almost on the brink of financial collapse—within an ace of the unhappy position of modern Greece or of Portugal, and the Rupee has yet to touch its bottom. Who knows to-morrow our government may not be compelled to play more desperate moves and the country condemned

to a permanent and ever-increasing deficit—the consequences of which let us not even think of anticipating. As Sir John Strachey said in one of his lectures on India before the University of Cambridge: ‘There is no Indian authority who does not feel that, if it be allowed to drift in the future as it has drifted in the past, we may some day find ourselves in a position not only of extreme financial difficulty but of political peril.’

Would we could stop our pen here. But there is yet another branch of this drainage to speak of. We have bought the friendship of the Amir of Cabul at too dear a cost. Twelve lakhs of Rupees have for years together been sacrificed annually at the shrine of diplomatic alliance with him—to cajoling an Oriental despot. To

this heavy bill, another 6 lakhs have been added by the munificence of the late Durand Mission. Besides this, India has to make large contributions to the following list of Her Britannic Majesty's Asiatic establishments.

Establishments	Amount of contribution	Establishments	Amount of contribution
	Rs.		Rs
Persia :—		Vice-Consulate at Chiengmai Siam	10,000
(1) Consul-General of Khorasan Frontier	150,000	Political Agent and Consulate at Muskat	31,200
(2) Bushire Residency	100,000	Political Assistant of Somali Coast	17,560
Consul General for Fars		Travelling expenses of the Resident in the French Colonies	9,000
Turkey :—		Consulate at Reunion	7,500
(1) Residency in Turkish Arabia	90,000	Consulate at Cayenne and Surinam	2,000
(2) Consul General for Baghdad			
(3) Consulate at Bassorah	6,000		
(4) Consulate at Jeddah	7,500		
(5) Vice-Consulate at Hodeidah			

Besides these permanent items of expenditure, we have sometimes to meet occasional bills of a rather curious nature. For the India Office buildings we have paid £540,000. for the Cooper's Hill College

so constant and accumulating a drain would soon impoverish even the wealthiest country on the globe.

Let us now draw to a close. In spite of 'the enormous development of the internal and the foreign trade of India, in spite of our 'remarkable material prosperity,' roseate and lengthy descriptions of which fill up the pages of many Anglo-Indian publications, the average income of an Indian does not get above 30s a year. Lord Cromer (then Sir Evelyn Baring) calculated it, in his able Financial Exposition of 1882, to be not more than Rs 27 per annum. Mr William Digby, C I E., a late editor of *India*, found it on independent calculation to be less than Rs 21. Mr Seymour Key, who has devoted much attention to the investigation

of this subject, would appear to endorse this statement. And everybody knows that Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji has, on his own showing, put it down only at Rs' 20. This will probably fail to convey to many of our readers the idea of the smallness of this sum. The following table prepared by Mr. Mullhal, in which we add the name of India, will, we have no doubt, explain the situation more fully.

Countries	Average income per head a year	Countries	Average income per head a year
Australia	£ 43	Ireland	£ 16
England	£ 41	Russia	£ 10
United States	£ 27	Turkey	£ 4
France	£ 23	India	£ 1-10s
Germany	£ 18		

The condition of Ireland has drawn the attention of successive Prime Ministers of the Queen and has been the cause of the



wreck of several Ministries. Yet Ireland is about 11 times richer than India ! Even Turkey in-Europe, the poorest country in the Continent, is nearly 3 times more wealthy than the greatest dependency\* of the British Crown in the East !

The two following quotations made from the writings of two most unimpeachable authorities of their times, will tell the history of our growing poverty under British Rule in the fewest words possible

The city of Murshidabad (the capital of Bengal) is as extensive, populous, and rich as the city of London, with this difference, that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than in the last city. (Lord Clive in 1757)

Poverty is the most striking fact in India. In the streets of the cities the rich

are rarer than in the streets of East London. In the country, the villages consist of huts of almost uniform smallness, and the fields are worked by farmers, most of whom are too poor to do anything but scratch the land.' Cannon Barnett in the *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1893.

THE END.

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Calcutta

PRINTED BY L. M. DASS, AT THE BRAHMO MISSION PRESS,  
211, CORNWALLIS STREET.